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# THE IRON MUSE

BY

JOHN CURTIS UNDERWOOD



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To  
HERSELF



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## FOREWORD

**H**E whose word is life incarnate, who through  
countless ages grows,  
To a world of evolution more and more His labors  
shows;  
More and more in man His image His eternal purpose  
knows:

Who through pain and toil enduring, Tubal Cain's  
first hammers wrought,  
Piled the Pyramids, and slowly Rome from civic chaos  
brought,  
Taught the slow approach of science to the citadels of  
thought.

Avatars of the Almighty first to mortal eyes revealed  
When a camp-fire first was kindled, when Achilles  
raised his shield;  
Learned to paint as Raphael painted, God in infant  
flesh concealed;

Learned to gaze with Galileo, learned to see as Newton  
saw

Starry space a serried army of unalterable law;  
Learned from nature's last recesses Delphic words of  
life to draw.

Taught to-day to sift the atom, grasp the germ and  
    probe the soul,  
Wrap the earth in rails of steel and wires that thrill  
    from pole to pole,  
Baffle death and ride the whirlwind; God and man  
    draw near their goal.

Avatars of the Almighty, surgeon, chemist, engineer,  
Preach to-day a new Evangel. Air-ships soar, His  
    angels. Fear  
Fails and fades; for man holds heaven in his hands  
    to-day and here.

# THE IRON MUSE



# THE IRON MUSE

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## I—THE GOD IN THE MACHINE

### THE PRESS ROOM

HERE are the tables of the law, to-day in steel  
decreed;

The last supreme commandment, "Thou shalt  
strenuously succeed."

The roaring presses multiply their Maker's restless  
will,

His powers and portents magnify, His creatures cure  
and kill.

The depths of ocean feel the stir these iron scribes  
translate.

The ends of earth are garnered bare to swell their  
aggregate.

Famine and plague are measured out and traders'  
prices rise.

And war's red sponge of wreck and rout their problem  
simplifies.

## The Press Room

From black and formless chaos the lines of type defile.  
Their columns massed are marching to their symphony  
    of style,  
Through a discipline of thunder where the Titans  
    swart are chained,  
And the presses close and sunder; to their triumph  
    foreordained.

The seas give up their secrets. The hills send down  
    their gold  
Herein to be accounted for, and weighed, and tried,  
    and told.  
And human hopes and prayers and fears, and loves  
    and lusts are wrought  
Into the lasting fabric of the nation's noblest thought.

Beneath the flimsy patterns and the proof-sheets of  
    to-day  
They are printing here to-morrow through the months  
    of long delay;  
The averages eternal that balance year by year,  
While stars and things supernal draw slowly near and  
    clear.

As nerves of sight and sentience will telegraph the  
    brain  
The impulse and the warning of unreckoned joy and  
    pain;  
To lurk in convolutions gray where germs of thought  
    are stored,  
Until the will asserts its sway and chooses from its  
    hoard:

So in the pregnant travail of the press room's fever  
heat,  
There broods where ocean cables and the wires of  
nations meet;  
Omniscience making all things good through wars of  
creed and clan  
And vision sure of brotherhood through strife evolved  
in man.

*Paris, 5' 13 '08.*

## THE BRIDGE

SCOUTING the trail to the shortest ferry the cave  
men first were its pioneers.

Lake dwellers grounded a rawhide wherry, sounded  
the shallows where stand these piers.

Warriors and workers, clans and nations, planted their  
palisades, drove their piles.

And the Romans builded its broad foundations, raised  
its approaches through blood red miles.

And the ages of stone and of iron were ended. And  
the world raced on, on its rails of steel,

And the thunders of God from the clouds descended  
roll through the wheels that these rivets feel.

"Let there be light," by His lips was spoken, filling  
the void where He quenched the sun.

And the silence of the hills was broken. And the arc  
lights flamed while the work was done.

Planning a path in the empty air the master hand and  
the master brain

Mounted the night as one mounts a stair, measured  
each torsion, thrust, and strain:

Spinning his spider web of steel, breasted the whirl-  
wind, wrestled through.

And the elements man's will shall feel. And their  
race and their rage are curbed anew.

This is our talisman and sign. This is our arch of a triumph vast.

For the brute is cowed by the voice divine. The future mounts and o'errides the past.

Over the girders the wires shall run, racing the trains through the midnight hurled.

Heralds of thought they outstrip the sun; and they bear man's records around the world.

Vibrant and strong as the wheels go rolling, out of the storm comes a symphony

Sure as the eye that the train controlling gauges the pressure of days to be.

Babes unborn in their mothers sleeping, thoughts undreamed in the poet's brain,

Wealth of the world in His single keeping stream through the storm as He drives His train.

Out of the night comes the snarl of the river. Though the beast is bound, he is strong to slay.

And the girders rock till they seem to shiver. And the winds shall winnow the weak away.

Now is your trial and your hour of trembling, perils of flaws and of shifting sand;

Souls that must pass, now is no dissembling. Say have ye built so your bridge shall stand?

*Seattle, 9' 12 '09.*

## THE RAILROAD

I AM the trail that your fathers have followed  
westward from sea to sea.

I am the skeleton grim you have fashioned to trouble  
the days to be;

King of the genii loosed from my prison, in the mines  
that your greed has revealed;

Reek of the breath of the wrath of Jehovah from the  
vials that your haste has unsealed.

I am inertia of matter and motion, of wheels rolling on  
through the night;

Æon on æon of long evolution through darkness  
advancing to light;

Pressure of millions of men and of women, that want  
and oppression and wrong

Thrust over seas to the west, to the prairies where the  
weak shall have space to grow strong.

I am the impulse that stirs in your pulses, the vital  
unrest of the race

Crushing the hours into seconds and striving to compass  
the conquest of space:

Power that forces an outlet, expansion that circles the  
planet, that spreads

Plowing the prairie, and felling the forests, and tramping  
the white water sheds.

Snow peak and city are waked by my whistles. I am  
as sleepless as death;

Strong as the lava that flows from the mountains.

Nor may I pause to take breath

More than the earth in its orbit unending, the growth  
of the grain that I bear

Forth from the fields to the seas, to the steamers, that  
the nations that hunger may share.

Last of the powers of nature and swiftest and  
strongest; her master and son,

Cleaving the mountains, and curbing the rivers, and  
reaping the desert I run.

I am aggression, extortion, and fraud. By the road  
where my highwaymen ride

Tidings and food for their need to the nations I bring,  
and my spoils I divide.

I am the steel that is laid on your shoulders, the  
scourge that your sins have deserved.

I am the pathway of God's own Evangel. Nor have  
His forerunners swerved.

Faster and faster and nearer and nearer He rides to  
His triumph with me.

I am His servant as strong and enduring and sure as  
His tides in His sea.

*Paris, 10' 31 '08.*

## THE AIR-SHIPS

THEY are coming, earth crowds closer. Man that  
crept, that slept, shall soar;  
For the teeming millions' pressure thrusts us upward  
more and more.  
From the spirit's lowest sources life in spate is rising  
high;  
Floods the cities, reaps the desert, seeks the conquest  
of the sky.

They are coming, war and havoc hover low and weight  
their wings;  
Death, destruction, rapine, pillage, till we rise to higher  
things.  
Flames of cities lit like torches still shall serve to show  
the way,  
We the race have won toward heaven since the first  
primordial day.

Senseless atom, sponge, medusa, polyp, fish and snake  
and ape;  
Still existence winds its spiral, breasts the trail to  
higher shape.  
Still the zigzags reach and widen, still the outlook  
gains and grows.  
Birds, our scouts and heralds, lead us till man's soul  
its mission knows.

Ages long of evolution, centuries of history,  
Lead us conquerors and captives to the day that sets  
us free;

Till life's pilgrims, eyes uplifting, see the dawn begin  
to wake

Near the holy mountain's summit; till the slaves their  
shackles break.

Unessential weight refining, casting off; the vital speed  
Of the motor's pulse increasing, throbbing harder; we  
shall need

Stronger hearts and surer vision. Some shall fall.  
But man shall reign,

Halt and struggle, rise and triumph, heaven's out-  
works here attain.

They are coming; unknown forces shall avail to lift  
them higher;

Teach our hands to steer, nor tremble, through the  
lightning's shafts of fire;

Ride the storm, and thread the whirlwind's maelstrom  
surely to our goal;

Homeward race through space unerring to the harbors  
of the soul.

Winds of Heaven, high archangels, cleave the clouds  
and wing their flight;

Wider vistas spread by day and wider still illumine at  
night;

Till the spirit stripped of matter like a naked athlete  
stands

On the brink of God's black ocean, yielding gladly to  
His hands.

*Paris, 11' 16 '08.*

## THE POWER-HOUSE

HERE have we focussed forces unknown until  
to-day.

Here have we hived new powers of flame that swarm  
and stream away

Down highways dark where globes of light along the  
meadows bloom;

Where lustrous lilies born of night dispel the city's  
gloom.

Efficient, brisk, decisive, the master spirit goes,  
Reviews his restless regiment of humming dynamos,  
His orders gives and vanishes. No thought have such  
as he

To glean the golden pollen of the midnight's mystery.  
Sufficient for their purpose they brought this thing  
to be.

His row of dwarfs distorted an oiler stooping tends  
Intent upon the second when his term of bondage  
ends.

His fellow slaves that prisoned here shall speed his  
flying car;

Shall light his way, and to his ear bring tidings from  
afar;

He sees not in the shadow where their ceaseless tread-  
mills turn.

He does his share and goes his way. More bright the  
arc lights burn.  
And men and women walk the streets where once the  
lava flared.  
And science searching deeper yet than man has done  
or dared,  
Another cranny in the void to human sight has bared. '   
  
High in His holy city in His power-house vast of space,  
The Master of us all looks forth. He sees His planets  
race,  
His dynamos that generate the thought that compre-  
hends  
The infinite; the will that still the finite's grasp  
extends;  
And love that shall interpret all and greater love beget.  
And the powers that dwell in darkness shall be  
delivered yet.  
He sets His finger to a switch. A world has ceased to  
be.  
Another flames new born; with it His Son and such as  
we.  
And light shall dawn on darkest night, and teach blind  
eyes to see.

*Paris, 11' 11 '08.*

## THE FOUNDRY

AS dawn darts forth from darkness like the loom of  
the rising sun,  
The crucible tilts outpouring the lights that leap and  
run.

And they blaze as the shadows seize them like new-  
born planets cast  
To the swaddling clothes that midnight, the midwife  
lifts at last.

Like the rush of a lava river, they flare through the  
narrow moulds,  
Till every sandy cradle a shape of splendor holds.  
And the fervor fails and the fever cools, and the heart  
of rose grows gray  
Till the sand with the thirst of a desert cold has  
drained its warmth away.

Slowly they set and harden there as the dreams and  
the loves of youth  
Cool to the old man's shrunken strength in a world of  
wasted truth.  
Buried in coffins black they lie, ranged in the barren  
sands  
Till a day of resurrection sets free strange angels'  
hands.

Slowly the workmen lift them up, lifeless and rigid  
bars,  
Food for the forges roaring loud, and the stuff that  
shines in stars;  
In red reincarnation again to glow until  
They are wrought into keels for steamers and the  
wheels of mine and mill.

They are rolled into plates that splinter the shells that  
shriek and fly  
Through the leagues of the reeling battle line in the  
strife of sea and sky.  
They are slowly shaped and tempered, whetted to steel  
as keen  
As the will of the surgeon cleaving surely life and death  
between.

They are fashioned a planet's fetters, girders whose  
grip shall hold  
The bulk of the earth together, crumbling in final cold.  
Till the heart of man grows great as fate; till his soul  
defies defeat;  
Here is his spirit's armor forged in the fires that his  
passions heat.

*Paris, 4' 21 '08.*

## THE COAL MINE

GOLD and crimson palely glimmer where their  
smoky skies are sinking low,  
While with eyes that see but dimly from the daylight  
and the dawn they go;

Till the darkness of the pit has claimed its own.  
There they feel the dull depression of the stirless and  
the scentless air.

There is winter's endless midnight but no wind has  
ever whispered there

And the spring and fall and summer are unknown.

Lost to them are form and color that all other weary  
mortals bless.

All their stolid, pallid faces are unchanging in forget-  
fulness.

Down the dimly lighted corridors they see  
Shapeless shadows, lamps that flicker, fading dreams  
of what was long ago.

In the tunnels slowly sinking till at last they meet the  
night, they know

All the brightness of the years that are to be.

To a slow and mournful cadence, to the labor of the  
breath they draw;

Strong in patience, striking blindly, they have beaten  
down the shapes they saw.

So their ears grow deaf to voices from within.  
Out of darkness into darkness in the freedom of the  
    night they reel;  
Out of weariness to slumber; and their masters' heavy  
    hands they feel  
Till they see another dreary day begin.

Buried sunshine lost for ages in the blackness of their  
    quest they find;  
Brightness turning night to noonday, heat that warms  
    the heart of humankind,  
Power making man the master of the sea;  
Force that fettered not forever, finds fulfillment of it-  
    self at last,  
Steam that coils the cage's cables which have linked  
    them to the sordid past;  
To the future when their souls in strength go free.

*New York, 7' 26 '04.*

## THE MOTOR

**J**EHU was my grandsire grim. High Jehovah's  
child

I was born to bring to you the beckon of the wild;  
Framed and fined to send you forth through the flood  
of noise

Where the city chokes and sweats; deathless girls and  
boys.

I was wrought with Vulcan's art, forged by Tubal  
Cain.

Archimedes measured me. Newton's mighty brain  
Figured on my formulas. Thor my framework made.  
Hermes my forerunner was, god of thieves and trade.

Wherefore in my destined hour I was sent to you;  
Speed and subtlety and power, pledge of kingdoms  
new,

Herald of the trackless trail to where the angels kneel;  
Child of earth's divine desire born of fire and steel;

Thunderbolt of peace and war, chariot swift of God;  
I shall reinforce your ranks, open paths untrod;  
Bring the dream that never dies to shade the crowded  
street,

Swaying boughs to weary eyes in noonday's fever heat.

Ye have filed the planets small. Air shod tires shall  
roll

Round my orbits over all earth from pole to pole.  
Ye have caged the powers of air; pulsing they respire  
Hills of space, creation's stair, mounting high and  
higher.

Pioneers and charioteers; who in wantonness  
Blindly and benighted steers, sets the pace no less.  
Reckless riders for the Throne, one eternal hand  
Holds my levers through your own; and man shall  
strive and stand.

All the earth is speeded up. Some shall triumph.  
Some

Whirling round the racing stars, hurled to kingdom  
come,

Scorn the barriers dark of sleep, and storm the gates  
of day.

Though our trail is shadowed deep the world is on its  
way.

*Suva Fiji, 4' 10 '09.*

## THE SEARCH-LIGHTS

GOD writes His scriptures still to-day. His messages of light  
Out of the shadow start and stray away across the  
    night,  
Through blinding seconds stop and stay to dazzle  
    mortal sight.

Whether from flaming battleship that hurls the bolts  
    of death,  
Or from some tall skyscraper tower while thousands  
    hold their breath  
Till the last vote is counted out, His final word He  
    saith;

Whether o'er Afric rivers dark where darker deeds are  
    done,  
Or where the red aurora's glare outshines the midnight  
    sun,  
Or where an army's iron prayer e'er daybreak has  
    begun:

Ever He sends His ministers. His angels strong  
    to-day,  
Soar through the press room's roar, explore the  
    liner's fog-locked way;  
New antitoxines ever seek; new credits grant and pay.

He sends His search-lights through the eyes that scan  
the depths of space;  
That planets weigh and scrutinize. He lends His  
servants grace,  
His elements to analyze, His working plans to trace.

He sends His search-lights through the sheets men  
inked while millions slept;  
His new beatitudes repeats till babes that died unwept  
In reeking slums and reckless streets, in mercy's arms  
have slept.

He sends His search-lights through the soul that  
shrivels in its ray,  
Till one that from the millions stole shall shrink, and  
start away  
From focussed eyes that stare nor spare, to thole his  
judgment day.

His moving finger points and probes. To worlds un-  
born it knows,  
Where some dead sun for centuries its final flicker  
throws  
Across the void as search-lights sweep, His eye unerr-  
ing goes.

*Paris, 6' 7 '08.*

## THE TRIP HAMMER

I RISE;

Like the wrath of the Lord, shaking sea and skies,  
Gathered and raised like a lifted fist,  
Threatening earth like a stormy cloud  
Where the snakes of the lightning swarm and twist;  
Till the crash of the thunder cries aloud;  
And the bolt is loosed, and the levin flies.

I fall;

Like the arm of the Law that is over all.  
And the white hot molten metal rains  
A shower of sparks through the shadowed air  
Like the thrills of a thousand travail pains,  
Till the stuff of the soul is beaten bare,  
Flailed from its husk, and is sifted small.

I am

In the army of man its battering ram;  
Welding the girders that carry the track,  
That fetter the void, that rout delay;  
Battering storm and the blackness back.  
And I forge the keel that shall cleave the spray,  
And I raise the real, and I crush the sham.

## The Trip Hammer

21

I mark;  
The time of your march from dawn to dark.  
And my brothers roll on their iron drums  
The sound of the charge, and they summon all  
As the hour of your fall or your triumph comes  
Sluggard and dreamer, great and small  
To the battle of life. You can hear them, Hark!

*Paris, 11 '7 '08.*

## II—THE SEA

### THE LIGHTHOUSE

I AM the ocean's finger-post. Hard by its high-  
way side  
I watch the long lean liners race; and tossed by wind  
and tide  
I see the anchored fishing boats at straining halters  
ride.

The storm wind's wolf pack round me raves and gal-  
lops through the night.  
In line on line of living graves the breakers slaver  
white,  
Till hailstones hurled from cloudy caves their clamors  
scourge and smite.

Unstirred I stand. My shafts of light a bow shot  
through the storm  
Beat back the murk. Like golden wasps they stab  
and soar and swarm,  
Till sailors' sinking hearts revive; leap up alive and  
warm.

Ten leagues of sea, ten leagues of shore, my whirling  
lanterns sweep

With sleepless eyes; and line on line the secrets of the  
deep

I read. The blackness is my book while vigils lone I  
keep.

Therein a gospel infinite the silences reveal.

I telegraph the truth of it. The song of steam and  
steel

I set to scale. I frame the phrase that men and moun-  
tains feel.

My beacon baton rules and sways the tempest's  
symphony.

In unrevealed unerring ways the elements with me  
In unison reiterate, "In service are we free."

I focus force and faith in one. I am night's burning  
glass.

I relay wireless messages of love from burnished brass.  
I show the spectrum clear of hope to souls that stran-  
gling pass.

I am the ocean's finger-post, its pillar at the goal.  
Skyward I point where planets all round starlit courses  
roll;

Where flaming comets blaze the trails, the orbits of the  
soul.

*New York, 11' 27 '07.*

## THE CAPTAIN

NO chaffroned charger forth I ride through ringing  
lists to reel.

No silver trumpet bids me bide the shock of steeds and  
steel.

No golden spur no valor's bride hath bound behind my  
heel.

But twice ten thousand horses' might is mine to rule  
and ride.

My coursing ground hath utmost bound where ebbs  
the polar tide

With glaciers' gleaming palisades upreared on either  
side.

They loose their bergs to buffet me, the winds of all the  
seas

Come urging surging squadrons out to leave me little  
ease.

Their clarions rage, the siren's shout makes symphony  
with these.

Sea mark and search-light share my aim till battle's  
day be born,

Till all my reeking battleship, her haunches hacked  
and torn,

Shall hurl her freight of flying death from out the  
bloodshot morn.

Helmed in my conning tower I see the stricken sea  
below.

I lash my broadsides through the smoke. Bowed by  
some staggering blow

I thrust my last torpedo forth to check a charging foe.

So may I sink, so may I swim. Alone abides for me  
The wingèd victory of the wind that rules the restless  
sea.

Our lady, steel thy soldiers' hearts with strong sweet  
breath of thee.

*New York, 10' 5 '05.*

## THE MINES

WE lurk in your stillest harbors, in your crowded  
water ways,  
Till the Master's hand that made us has told its tale of  
days,  
And your strongest ships and captains come charging  
swiftly by;  
And then we rise and smite them from our ambush  
where we lie.

Well may your hard hearts falter and tremble iron  
nerves.  
A single finger's pressure for scarce a second serves,  
And twenty thousand tons of steel and the life and  
death it bore  
In wreck and ruin red shall reel. And your millions  
are no more.

For so in tones of thunder to hardened ears we say,  
"For every single sin you sin, in some way you shall  
pay."  
And He whose word eternal decrees that wars shall  
cease,  
Has made us mouths to preach to you the dearer price  
of peace.

So shall you guard your bodies in peril and distress,  
While the many toil and hunger; that one in wanton-  
ness

May win to wealth and mastery; who most of all has  
failed.

Hath He not mined your spirits too, whose strong-  
holds are assailed?

*Paris, 11' 9 '08.*

## THE FOG

I AM the reek of the days that were and the breath  
of the days to be.

All the ghosts of the ages swarm and stir when my  
hosts march in from sea;

Till they sink as the twilight falls afar, and a deeper  
shade is laid

On the sodden sands, and the stricken lands grow still  
and sore afraid,

And I muffle the siren's warning note and I baffle the  
lighthouse beam.

And the greasy rails down their long blind trails feel  
the slackening strength of steam.

And the wheels turn slow and the fires grow low.  
City and countryside

Choke in my grip, and sea and ship, where my still  
gray squadrons ride.

And I pearl the long gray grasses by the buried sea-  
man's graves.

Incense of unseen masses I lift from my lone sea caves,  
To the sound of a sigh that passes in the hush of the  
winds and waves.

And I brood in the silence, lingering under the shroud  
of night

As a widowed mother waits for the birth that brings  
her babe to light,

On earth till the birth of the flowers of spring and the  
blue bird's nesting call.

And I crouch till the stars grow clear again, till the  
bars of the morning fall;

Till I kiss the cheek of a child that smiles e'er the sun  
stands lord of all.

For I am the darkness, the doubt, the dread that stifle  
your hopes and prayers,

I am the fears of your fathers dead, and their mothers'  
tears and cares.

I am the lives that start and lurk when the brightest  
noon burns dim

In the shadows cold, in the mist and murk of the slum's  
blind menace grim.

I am the strong man's well of strength, and the ford  
where the coward falls,

And the gate that shall wait for all at length through  
the everlasting walls;

Spores as of hoarfrost sifted o'er the fruitful field of  
night;

Shreds of a banner rifted where dying heroes fight;

Or a curtain caught and lifted when you wake to a  
world of light.

*S. S. Amerika, 1' 7 '07.*

## THE WAVE

OUT of the darkness of time and the stress of an  
impulse unending,

Out of the deep I arise, and shoreward unresting I  
roll;

Till the breaker resounds on the beach and it curls  
and it crashes descending,

And rending the sands it subsides; and is scattered  
and swept from its goal.

I am the impact of light on your eyes, and the glow  
and the gleam of the vision.

I am a second of sound and the echo that stirs in  
the brain;

And the past that awakes and regrets and aspires; and  
the hope of a harbor Elysian,

Lost and recalled and disowned and restored,  
through a lifetime of passion and pain.

I am the march of events past the purpose that cradles  
creation;

And the end of your millions of lives like the foam  
bells that whiten and fade;

And the roll of the drums down the ranks, and the  
charge of the steel crested wrath of a nation.

I am the wailing of women that bury their dead in  
the shade.

I am the round of the seasons; the rose of the summer  
unfolding;

Swelling of sap in the spring, and its shrinkage  
when winter turns white.

I am the song of your youth, and your autumn its  
bleakness beholding,

I am the burden and the heat of the day, and the  
shadows and dreams of the night.

I am the beat of your heart, and the breath that you  
draw when the morning

Rises in fire on the hills; and the setting of moon,  
and of sun.

I am the crest of to-day, and the fortune that fails  
without warning;

And the triumph that fades; and the struggle with  
death; and the rest when the battle is done.

I am the spray that is scattered; the laughter and loves  
of the city.

I am the darkness below and the lives that the  
weight of the world shall sustain.

I am the sorrow that sobs in the sea, and the tides of  
an infinite pity;

And the whisper of winds, and the smile of a child,  
and the ripple and rush of the rain.

I am the passion whose strength is a snare, and the  
love whose redemption is friendless,

I am your soul's resurrection from sin and from  
shame and the grave;

Growth of the grain, and the travail of life that toils  
through eternities endless.

I am the pulse of the cosmos whose life is to God as  
a wave.

*Paris, 11' 25 '08.*

## BEYOND THE SEA

**B**EYOND the sea the sun goes down.  
The gray gulls follow in his wake.  
There towering ships their cargoes take,  
There troop the clouds. There would I be  
In some fantastic foreign town,  
Where waves on coral beaches break;  
And brawny boatmen, bare and brown,  
Ply through the surf beyond the sea.

Beyond the sea they traffic there  
In ambergris and frankincense;  
Strange furs that floor barbaric tents,  
And ostrich eggs and ivory;  
And sandalwood and camel's hair;  
And uncut rubies, rare, immense;  
That women round their foreheads wear  
In wonderlands beyond the sea.

Beyond the sea the temple bells  
Are calling Buddhist priests to prayer.  
There war drums tear the tropic air.  
The monsoon sighs incessantly;  
The mueddin calls, the jackal yells,  
The serpent charmer's fife is there.  
And still the mingled murmur swells  
And fills my ears beyond the sea.

From every weary breaker wells  
Resistlessly, implacably;  
In every heart forever dwells;  
Unsatisfied, beyond the sea.

*Long Beach, 2' 26 '04.*

## THE COAL PASSERS

FULL speed it is. The gauges rise. Each lip of  
vivid rose  
That grins around its furnace door, intense, insistent,  
glows,  
Fast gape and glut the mouths of fire. Hearts in hot  
haste shall beat.  
And lungs shall strain to drink and drain the torment  
tides of heat.  
For wind and wave have lift them up to rave against  
our way,  
And we that heed our engines' need their iron law  
obey.

This was the law that once we saw afar and unawares.  
Now every yawning molten maw the gate of judgment  
flares.  
Stripped to the waist we hurl in haste the black, the  
naked soul,  
To feed the fast devouring flame that leaps to lick the  
coal.  
Earth's power-house is stoked in hell. None knew it  
more than we  
That drive ten thousand tons along a thousand leagues  
of sea.

Ten thousand tons, a thousand lives, a world that  
holds its course

By night and day through fog and fray of waves, and  
braves their force;

Unerring as the planet's sweep athwart the gulf of  
sky.

This was the tale that once we told to girls in days  
gone by.

Midmost a silver sea we hung, the winds, the world  
asleep;

While silver stars in order swung across the upper  
deep.

Those starry nights, those harbor lights, those girls  
with eager eyes

Must watch and wait alone and late, till love deluded  
dies.

Bare in the blinding furnace glare our heritage we  
know,

Held fast upon one half-inch plate. A mile of sea  
below

Drops black and sheer and deadly near. Grip tight  
the brands that burn,

And seethe and sear, to banish fear; till faith and  
hope return.

Though we to harlot ports have thrown our youth, our  
years away;

And squandered more than was our own, we may be  
men to pay.

Our drunken eyes by pain made wise, here wings of  
fire shall see;

That veil a shrine where halos shine, where high  
archangels be.

Not all of us shall sink to shame; my brothers born to  
strife,

The wrestle of the winds and flame; the firing line of  
life.

*New York, 12' 9 '03.*

## THE LINER

WHEN the world in the womb of the midnight  
weighed the High God moulded me.  
And He fined my lines to a scale He made or e'er was  
air or sea;  
Or harbors or ocean lanes He laid on the chart of a  
world to be.

When He breathed on the void with the breath of life,  
e'er He quickened the soul of man;  
E'er He whetted His will as one whets a knife; while  
the lava rivers ran;  
The shell of my hull in His hills He hid till the iron  
years began.

Out of His spirit's treasures His dauntless captains  
came.  
Out of His hoards on the mountainside His miners  
fed the flame.  
From the bridal red of coal and steel I sped His tides  
to tame.

Man that hath bridled and saddled me with a harness  
soft of steam;  
Rides through the riot of wind and sea where the  
breakers roll abeam;  
Spurs through the midnight's mystery while the stars  
his sign-posts gleam.

## The Liner

He has filled me with force, and the food that slays  
famine in foreign lands.

He has set me my course that no storm delays. On  
my ice bound bridge he stands.

Like a foam flecked horse my speed he sways; and his  
soul my strength commands.

He has filled me with fever, filth, and crime that breed  
my bowels within

As they breed in His till the destined time when the  
judgments black begin;

And the germ of the stagnant steerage slime is the seed  
of a nation's sin.

Laughter of children, lilt of song, and the prayer of  
love I freight,

And the master builder's purpose strong, and failure  
desolate;

And the pilgrim hopes and fears that throng through  
the new world's water gate.

And they pass and scatter like the spray, and day by  
day goes by.

And night by night I plow my way through a gulf of  
starlit sky,

Where planets lone one law obey; the same as you  
and I.

*Paris, 10' 14 '08.*

## THE SANDS

ONCE we were not. Wind and sea round the lava  
turned to stone  
Made the sea cliffs. Somberly boulders ground to  
pebbles shone.  
Scaled and screened and sifted, we in our multitudes  
were known.

Round the shores of all the earth in a long, unbroken  
line  
In a girdle gem besprent, gleaming in the sun we shine,  
Smooth and hard and redolent of the fragrance of the  
brine.

We make white her marriage bed where the passion  
of the tides  
Foaming mounts to meet the moon, over her remorse-  
less rides,  
Has its moment and departs; lies in wait, in shadow  
hides.

We are earthworks. Where the rocks, castles breached  
by waves, must fall;  
We sustain their wildest shocks. Past our harbor  
bars they crawl.  
Sanctuary from the storm, refuge free we grant to all.

We are snares, our shallows lie underneath the smiling  
sea;  
Lure the sailors till the sky changes, blackens; hard  
alee,  
Gleaming breakers surging high, shout our sirens'  
threnody.

We are scourges where the dunes rank by rank  
devouring go;  
Shoreward march, and spoil the soil; lay your farms  
and houses low;  
Till you plant the creeping things that slowly bind and  
break their blow.

So we symbol all the souls of the multitudes that lie  
Near the last frontier of life and the strife of sea and  
sky.  
Time his tides around them rolls, day and night that  
pass them by.

Small essential atoms all, daily stronger than before;  
For the mighty are made small; ever farther spreads  
the shore.  
Rocks and cliffs and mountains fall, and the sands  
are more and more.

These ye have to reckon with who are masters here  
to-day.  
You must learn the primal law that both sands and  
souls obey;  
Learn the meaning of their march, senseless, slow, and  
grim and gray.

That you lay your forests low, bare your lives to storm  
and sand;

Slum and mill by millions know. Hardly shall you  
understand

Channels choke, and shallows grow, and dunes arise,  
and eat the land.

*Paris, 11' 20 '08.*

## THE DERELICT

ONCE I rose in freedom where the sunrise crowns  
the hills;  
Where in serried columns, rippling seaward race the  
rills;  
Where the voice of ocean through the pine trees calls  
and thrills.

Then they felled and branded me and flayed my  
strength with steel;  
Forged the rusting fetters that my festered flesh must  
feel;  
Fashioned bolt and plate and plank, and mast and  
spar and keel.

I was thrust into the deep to float or founder there,  
Outcast of the endless streets where stars from heaven  
stare;  
Every rock a stumbling block, and every shoal a  
snare.

Men have had their will with me while heaven's stars  
were white;  
Raped and robbed me of my youth and beauty and  
delight;  
Fleeing from the wrath to come, have left me in the  
night.

In the night I lie and lurk, derelict and black,  
Till I drift into the liner's fog-beleaguered track  
Till a thousand dive to death; and never one comes  
back.

You shall build your lighthouses, chart and sound your  
seas.

Still I spoil your argosies and bring you to your knees;  
Still the ocean's waste infect with ruin and unease.

Wanton, wasted, water logged, waiting for the day  
When the dark destroyer's shells shall shred my flesh  
away;

When my bridegroom of the storm no longer shall  
delay.

*Sydney, 4' 5 '09.*

### III—WOMEN

#### MOTHERHOOD

NOW is it springtime in a fruitful land.  
Heaven has drawn near to earth in April rain,  
Out of their close embrace the growth of grain,  
The flowers that on her face like flushes stand,  
The bridal whiteness of the orchard trees,  
The little leaves that whisper to the breeze,  
The new-born baby buds that bless the sun,  
The birds that sing of summer just begun,  
Of homes and households that are yet to be;  
Are all around me, all akin in me.

The south wind and the sunshine warm the blood,  
The scent of growing grass is strong and sweet,  
Through all the trees, all flowers that fleck my feet,  
The sap streams upward in a rising flood;  
The tide of spring that surges toward the sky,  
The sharp sweet thrill that flutters, strives to fly,  
That pulses fast, that beats beneath my heart  
Trying to tear this cage of flesh apart;  
Of me shall soon be born a wingèd thing,  
A soul that seeks to soar; that dumb would sing.

To-day it sings in me beside the sea.  
 I am a mouth that utters nature's word;  
 The secret whisper in the midnight heard,  
 Longing for life and love and liberty.  
 I am fulfilled, my womanhood awake,  
 Waxing like waves that swell before they break,  
 Tossing aside their fading flowers of foam.  
 Life by my heart hid, must you haste from home?  
 Ah, but the flowers that fall beneath the frost!  
 Soul of my soul, we shall not all be lost.

*S. S. Bremen, 7' 24 '05.*

## THE INCOMMENSURABLE

OUR life is the river of space.  
And death is the brink of the falls  
Where the star drift is foam on its face.  
And time is a shadow that crawls.

And our love is our ultimate breath;  
The throb of two hearts through the void;  
The long sigh in the silence of death  
Till the fetters of flesh are destroyed.

Can you measure the round of the sky?  
Can you reckon the race of the sun?  
Can you fathom the depth of the eye  
That has mirrored creation in one?

Have you found her, the motive of life,  
And the symphony's holiest theme?  
The beloved, the mother, the wife;  
And the real that remains from the dream?

Though the planets are parcelled and weighed  
By your wit; and the walls of the heart  
By your scalpel; though talons of trade  
Tear the bowels of the mountains apart:

All your labors are houses of sand,  
Such as children have built by the sea.  
All our arts but as bubbles expand,  
And have ceased while beginning to be.

All our works are as grains of the sand,  
All our words as the gleam of the snow.  
We who sorrow alone understand.  
You must lose her, and find her, and know.

*New York, 12' 2 '04.*

## THE ULTIMATE

**B**ETTER you know yourself now, knowing her;  
Feeling the brute from its lair in you stir,  
Leap to its mate; and unleashed like its prey  
Sated and senseless, lie sleeping till day.

Waking you looked at her, alien and strange,  
Fetter of flesh for your soul that must range;  
Shrank from her, hated her. Sudden she smiled.  
She was an animal changed to a child.

Yes, she is animal yet most of all.  
Nature that mothers and nurses us; small,  
Shallow, inscrutable, furtive, and sly;  
Instinct that lies while her eyes meet your eye.

There she lies nude in her litter of lace;  
Childish and crude, and your freedom's disgrace.  
With her you sounded the depths. Shall you rise?  
She is a soul in her body's disguise.

Back to the primitive nature to-day  
Strong in you summons you. Take her away.  
Turn to the mountains. Earn slumber like lead;  
Nerves that have tortured you dormant and dead.

Climb with her. Struggle o'er rock-ledge and shelf.  
Helping her grow with her stronger yourself.  
Pause for the vistas, drink deep of the air.  
Gather her flowers where each is a prayer.

Strive with her. Thrive with her, patient and wise,  
Faithful, enduring, and fitter to rise.  
You were her guide. Will you hinder or aid  
Now that her soul has the summit assayed?

This is your ultimate; barriers and bars,  
Rounds in its ladder like children and stars.

*Paris, 12' 15 '09.*

## THE MOTHER

HER world within her arms she holds  
Heart to her heart, the life to be;  
From her own flesh an image moulds;  
In infant eyes she seeks to see  
The best of all that gave her birth,  
Mirrors of heaven made on earth.

The mysteries of ages past  
Have made her Sybil, prophetess.  
She scans the future's purpose vast  
In this her son. To-day's caress  
While Cosmos halts to question here  
Is Delphic portent—smile or tear.

Oh, Mother, may thine arms be strong!  
Weigh love with justice. Even so  
A little moment, not for long,  
Thine is the balance, weal or woe.  
And tremble not to take the scales;  
For by thy faith he wins or fails.

*New York, 3' 4 '02.*

## THE LIFE CLASS

PAST wasted color splashed on grimy walls  
Like sunset hues, or fires that flare at dawn  
Through life's gray monotone, the eye is drawn  
To the white central shape that voiceless calls.

For here is Woman waiting pale and still,  
Essential, silent, stripped of vanity,  
Bare to the soul that has the eyes to see,  
The strength and weakness that within her thrill.

Look well O artist. Balance light and shade,  
Lend the bare breast a prophet's tenderness,  
Till children nestle there. Express no less  
The flesh superb that nature naked made,

Like some white pedestal that shall enthrone  
A soul new risen to the lips and eyes.  
Some street drab, drifted here, in dumb surmise  
Seeing your likeness, may fulfill her own.

She stands the symbol of her sisters all;  
Mother and wife and wanton, child and saint;  
Into man's hands ordained to teach or taint,  
Whether his art on earth be great or small.

Not all the honors that his peers confer;  
Wisdom, achievement, riches, fame, command;  
Shall test the soul that is to fall or stand;  
As what he makes or fails to make of her.

*Paris, 4' 28 '08.*

## THE CAT

A IN'T women cats? They 's kittens when they 's small.

That 's evolution. When they 's grown most all  
Are much the same. They call each other so.  
Sometimes the truth by instinct like they know.  
They yawn, and lick their fur, and trim their duds,  
And when you stroke them right they 're smooth as  
suds.

And when you stroke them wrong it ain't no joke.  
They 'd rather have that though than ne'er a stroke.  
They stretch and purr, and sidle round and creep  
Into your lap and cuddle, go to sleep,  
When you don't want them much. And when you do  
It takes a year to coax them back to you.  
Lord, how they scratch. They 's the most cruel thing  
To mice and kids they hate. And when they sing—  
Me to the timber tall! That 's common ones.  
The best, there 's nothing better all God's suns  
Have ever shone on or shall ever see;  
One in a million—maybe two or three.  
And how they hate each other, when the men  
Won't go round right. That 's nature's plan again.  
Give them a house and babies of their own,  
A master who will let them well alone,

## The Cat

But not too long; they 're almost happy till  
He has to scare them. Let them lap their fill  
Till their fur shines and others envy them;  
Give them a chance their sisters to condemn  
For what they want themselves; they 'll love you so.  
And in their heart of hearts this truth they know.  
I 'm one myself. That 's why I 'm bound to say  
We always have to give ourselves away.

*Paris, 12' 2 '08.*

## THE MIRROR

THIS is the empty room where once she dwelt  
Before she went away,  
This is the glass that her soft breath has felt  
Upon it day by day.

This is the frame that held her portrait dear,  
Too perfect long to last.  
So when I held her closest, warm and near  
Into the void she passed.

There is an empty chamber in my heart,  
Silent and clean and cold,  
And there when twilight falls I walk apart  
There for an hour grown old.

There is a mirror there, wherein she stands  
A spirit pale and dim,  
Lifting to me in silence tender hands  
Held fast by seraphim.

Earth in its shifting orbit sees the sun  
Fulfill the shades of night.  
Another here shall do what she has done,  
Let in new air and light.

Children shall come and stand where once she stood;  
Where children long ago  
When to our fathers life and love seemed good,  
Learned wistful lips to know.

But in the land beyond the mirror's gates,  
Beyond its bars of air,  
There is a room wherein she smiles and waits  
Forever first and fair.

*Paris, 4' 14 '08.*

## DUST DEVILS (LES MONDAINES)

WE have no breath to say one word. We have no time. But still we must.

To-day our shallow souls are stirred though we are children of the dust.

To-day there came a circling gust of winds that sweep to wider things,

To higher, truer too we trust; and on its eddies we have wings.

And yet we know it cannot last. We have no hope to stir and save.

We have forgotten all the past, the sense of loss the parting gave.

We have no faith. We cannot see. There may be stars but we are blind.

We have no love. Eternity may warm our ashes unresigned.

But we are old and we are cold, unresting ghosts of days gone by;

Seraglio slaves our mothers sold for man's delight to dance and die.

Our sinful sisters walk the streets. We have no strength, no skill to sin.

In them the world's red life blood beats, and love redemption sore may win.

But we are passionless and pale or flushed with sunset's  
fitful glow.

And in the night we fade and fail. The depths of life  
we never know.

We see the children of our friends, we clasp them close.  
They never smile.

They shun our kisses. So it ends, the flame that  
flickered for a while.

For we are dead. And yet we bear contagion to the  
world around;

The dust whose clouds obscure the air, that lies a  
blight upon the ground,

That blinds the eyes, that color steals and light and  
truth from living things,

That chokes the throat, that clogs the wheels, that far  
and wide pollution flings.

For wheels must turn, and fires must burn, and dust  
and ashes we are made,

And seeds of death, that men may learn in us them-  
selves are most betrayed;

That love and sorrow, fire and tears might mould our  
clay to life again,

Who line the highway of the years and for our waking  
wait in vain.

And other women envied us. They taught their  
daughters such as we

Are rich and rare and meritorious. And as we were they  
strove to be.

Forbear and spare. Our vanity is made the limbo of  
our haste,

They will not hear. They cannot see the wind that  
whirls along the waste.

And we must dance with it to-day. But if one other  
wakes again

Who hears our prayer, and turns away; we have not  
lived and died in vain.

*Paris, 12' 5 '08.*

## THE HILLTOP

THERE is a hilltop where I go  
When evening turns to afterglow,  
And broken wracks and wrecks of day  
Into the darkness drift away.  
Salt blows the wind there from the sea  
And on its breath she comes to me.

There is a hilltop of the morn  
Where Bethlehem each day reborn  
Thrones its Madonna. At her shrine  
I offer gifts. And wings divine,  
And winds of heaven worship there,  
And kings and shepherds meet in prayer.

There is a hilltop of the night,  
Where heaven's myriad trails of light  
Exalt their vistas wide and far,  
And lure the soul from star to star;  
Where moonlit pools of silver sheen  
Ripple and purge my passion clean.

There is a hilltop of the noon  
Where life in flood is lapped in June,  
Prone on the scented turf I lie  
And count our castles in the sky  
And watch the clouds slow blossoming  
Unfolding all the years shall bring.

There is a hilltop of the heart  
And while she dreams and prays apart;  
Her eyes have caught the sunrise there,  
And twilight tangled in her hair  
Is waiting till I climb that hill,  
And hearts throb loud, though lips are still.

*Auckland, 3' 26 '09.*

## LOVE LETTERS OF A MOTHER, VII

TO-DAY my baby learned to walk alone.  
Each little step he staggered from my arms  
Into his future's fortunes, far, unknown,  
Was dogged by furtive fears and faint alarms  
That ghostlike trooped before him and behind;  
That dimmed his smile with tears that left me blind.

I had so loved the life that all was mine,  
That waked within me quickened like a flame;  
That leapt to light through pain's red flare divine,  
That round about my breast devouring came,  
Drawing from me immortal life and heat:  
Dear little lips with kisses piercing sweet.

Now is he weaned and walks, and all goes well.  
Already he begins his baby words.  
His own life's story tries to all to tell  
In accents sweeter than the song of birds.  
And through my tears my heart his laughter hears  
And treasures all against the tyrant years.

Life is too frail to turn its pages back.  
So we must find them fairest once for all;  
Snatch for to-day lest we to-morrow lack.  
He must go forth to struggle, stand or fall.  
Let me be nearest, dearest by thy side  
Until the unveiled future brings its bride.

*New York, 7' 12 '05.*

## IV—SCIENCE

### WIRELESS

WE listen to new oracles across the darkest night,  
Interpreting the void to those that may not  
read aright.

We see the bottled lightning seethe in serried Leyden  
jars;

The rapid fire that crashes, hear through strange sym-  
phonic bars.

We know that other instruments are tuned to answer  
ours;

Beyond the bounds of mortal sense a host of allied  
powers

March on to beat the blackness back; and matter's  
brutal odds

Thrill to the martial music of men and demigods.

Across the wrath of oceans, round the rocks that rend  
and slay

The spars lift up their signals like hands upraised to  
pray.

Unseen and unsolicited they make their message  
known.

And men that seek an unknown God come closer to  
their own.

The fleshless fingers beckon. They baffle fog and  
storm,  
The letters of infinity's mute alphabet they form,  
While voiceless angels silent throng, for mortal hearing  
seek  
Of Him who to His blind gives sight and makes His  
dumb to speak.

*Paris, 7' 18 '08.*

## THE X-RAYS

YOU love her better than your life,  
And now the hour has come.  
Her tender flesh shall feel the knife,  
Your throttled heart be dumb.

You see the clotted seeds of death  
Inside her, this alone.  
The pulse grows faint. The vital breath  
Eludes its cage of bone.

And that grim skeleton that all  
Our strength and beauty bears  
Essential looms. The flesh its thrall  
Each second thinner wears.

Another surgeon's hand shall lay  
The inner tissues bare.  
With bleeding lips you strive to pray  
Who say, "There is no prayer."

This you believe. We feel and see  
(Ye blind that lead the blind)  
Though life to-morrow may not be  
When death leaves dust behind.

## The X-Rays

New stars unborn you demonstrate  
Beyond our range of sight.  
New germs of life's last ultimate  
Your lenses bring to light.

Your spirit sickens. Toil and hope  
For science nears its goal.  
The mind shall find its microscope,  
New X-rays save the soul.

*Paris, 12' 19 '09.*

## ANTITOXINE

THIS is the secret that nature concealed;  
Who out of ether her elements wrought,  
Out of them mind; till to-day has revealed  
Part of the purpose of infinite thought.

Pharaohs and priests with their Pyramids passed,  
Monarchs, inquisitors blind led the blind.  
Man tore the scales from his eyes, and at last  
Sees himself fit their resultant to find.

Under the test tube a colorless flame  
Rises like science transforming the race.  
Doubt and disease and decadence and shame  
Fail, and for larger fruition make place.

Germ and bacillus are marshalled and scanned,  
Microbes benign are enlisted to serve,  
March and assault at the Master's command,  
Fortify faltering sinew and nerve.

Death wavers back; and life's columns advance.  
Powers of darkness from sick bed and slum,  
Turn to retreat; and the world from its trance  
Wakes and is strong. And each day adds its sum.

Life's true elixir the chemist has found.  
Lifting his test tube in silence he stands;  
Knows that a Greater environs him round,  
Life in solution upraised in His hands.

*New York, 8' 7 '09.*

## RADIUM

LIFE on this planet is death and decay.  
The desert grows greater, the air wastes away.  
Laughter and love and their infinite cost  
Dwindle and fail till the ultimate frost.

Life in each one of us runs to its end.  
Age is a desert, the shadows descend.  
Cold grow the heart and its hopes until death  
Wipes from our lips the last measure of breath.

Farther the frost line shall creep from the poles,  
Doubt and disaster shall deaden your souls.  
Coal-fields are wasted. The lava is cold.  
Gorged on earth's vitals the race has grown old.

Spirits decay, and our millions are more.  
We have forgotten to pray and adore.  
Honor is lost or is held at a price.  
Virtue is vain and the victim of vice.

We are degenerate, false and unfit,  
Millions that race to the verge of the pit;  
Blinded, stampeded, to blackness we go,  
Never an echo is heard from below.

Yet the unfit shall its fitness evolve.  
Enters a factor our problems to solve.  
Elements lapse; from their wreck is descried  
Radium stronger than tempest and tide.

Out of the grave is salvation's rebirth;  
Love that is vital, outliving the earth;  
Light, heat and power that shall pierce through the  
void;  
Mind that shall mount, though the stars be destroyed.

Failures and falls are our ladder through space;  
Death the dark handicap, life the long race.

*Paris, 12' 20 '09.*

## THE LABORATORY

A BSCISSA and coördinate on paper ruled we plot  
and chart;

The atom's soul substantiate; all life's partitions tear  
apart.

We focus down our microscope—a hair's breadth the  
horizon fills—

In fragile test tubes blindly grope for life that through  
the ether thrills.

We build our castles in the sand against the rising of  
the sea.

Our theories, our life works, stand one moment; then  
they cease to be.

We set our marks and some remain, to show the limits  
of its flow.

To-morrow shall some better brain the reasons for our  
error know.

Some truths essential holding yet, the digits of the  
problem vast,

The letters of life's alphabet, we stir one step beyond  
the past.

The deeper sense of nature's word, the scope of quanti-  
ties unknown,

Of formulas unseen, unheard; we miss, we may not  
make our own.

But science long in patience toils, content to ponder,  
sift and scan

The power whose purpose nothing foils, the elemental  
rise of man;

The growth of germs in chaos born that solar fires  
unseared behold;

Unchilled shall death and darkness scorn, and inter-  
planetary cold.

The great equation clearer frames; such modes of  
matter treated thus

By older or by later names make the same minus still  
or plus.

Such forms of forces focussed so the same resultant  
always yield.

So tides must turn and rivers flow till the soul's secrets  
stand revealed.

These are the rinsings of the glass, the droppings from  
the slow retort.

So clouds condense and nations pass, the crystal  
forms, our brains report.

Untrained assistants pencils seize, fallen and dull and  
broken; so

They calculate infinities and add their cyphers to the  
row.

The bubble breaks, the life is lost. O fool and slow  
of heart and blind!

That life that all earth's aeons cost has gone its larger  
life to find.

The rarer essence, redistilled, sublimed shall mount to  
larger air,

The Master Chemist so has willed. His inner room  
awaits us there.

*Paris, 12' 29 '08.*

## THE OBSERVATORY

“SNOWFLAKES in the night, you think them,  
poet?

Planets blossom nightly in your vision?  
At your highest range you seem to see them  
Serried hosts of heaven and signal beacons?  
I have learned the stars, a lifetime, slowly;  
Scanned them, weighed them, charted out their  
courses;

Made my spectroscope a surgeon's scalpel,  
Analyzed their thin red lines, their life blood;  
Vivisected them, and learned their secrets.

“Man, I tell you, they 're eternal digits  
On the great big blackboard of the midnight,  
Where the Purpose of all evolution  
Works His mighty problems out forever.  
And the mind of man informs His fingers,  
Mounts to meet His mind, and shares His life-work.

“Planets pass and agonize for ages,  
Die, and are reborn again forever.  
So the soul of man that is immortal  
Suffers change, survives, and out of chaos  
Learns the elemental law of living

Discipline through struggle.—And the midnight  
Slowly grows more clear. Another factor  
Simplifies; another vista opens.  
Lad, to-night, I chart a moon of Neptune  
Found by me an hour before you entered.  
Very likely we shall read to-morrow  
That some German saw it first. So be it.  
Does it matter, so the star is charted?"

*New York, 2' 12' 1910.*

## THE CONSULTING ROOM

THIS is our last confessional. The rest have we  
outgrown.

And here our brothers who have sinned to judgment  
go alone.

In shadow and in silence till someone coughs, they  
wait,

They turn the tattered pages and the pictures out of  
date

Of magazines scarce six months old, so fast we grow  
to-day.

Some see the whole world's records there. Some  
shiver, try to pray.

The black door opens. One appears, the judge of  
laws divine

You have transgressed. Your fellow sinners answer  
to his sign.

White cheeks grow whiter. So you wait. Your turn  
has come at last

And now the trembling present tries to answer for the  
past.

He puts his question with his lips. His wise eyes read  
you through

Before you speak. His strong hands hold a probe, and  
your heart too.

You see another rise in turn. You stiffen, try to  
smile.

A woman weeps in silence. You can pity her awhile.

A child sobs loud. You softly curse. You start.  
You hear a groan,  
And panic comes. You pay your shot. You want  
to be alone.  
You hail a cab, steal through your house; and now at  
last you face  
Your private bar of judgment in the old familiar place.  
Here is the study. Here the books you read, believed  
in youth,  
When worlds were yours to win; and here her picture,  
God's best truth.  
Alive or dead it matters not. You may not meet her  
there.  
Here you shall shrink, shall hate her. Could she for-  
ever care?  
Five years? Or ten at most? You hear your sen-  
tence. Prisoned here  
Scarce sixty days. In Arizona, possibly a year.  
You're ordered south. Man can't you see! Whether  
you live or die  
You go where He shall send you, who shall hold you,  
hand and eye.  
No priest can damn your soul to-day. No doctor's  
word can kill.  
You have your fraction's fighting chance; indomitable  
will.  
If you can capture life again, think you His purpose  
fails  
Who tests you, rests you, tests you, till your soul  
grown strong prevails?

*Paris, 12' 12 '08.*

## THE UPLIFT

YES the world is worse and better both, to-day  
than long ago.

Species vary. Vice and virtue more evolved and fitter  
grow

For the one primordial purpose. Some revert to type,  
but all

Are not wasted, unconsidered, howsoever slight and  
small.

Long ago men told the story of the lost Atlantis land  
Sunk in wrath for sin transcendent, since they could  
not understand

That the purpose is not human, that its will is not as  
ours.

Sin and death like pain and slumber are its strong  
subservient powers.

Long ago the lava mountains started from the ocean's  
plain,

Some to stand in island summits, some to sink from  
sight again.

Aeons passed. And coral polyps died and with their  
bones prepared

Foothold for new generations that their labor blindly  
shared.

Ages passed. They ringed the mountain till the  
atoll raised its reef.

Sand was powdered. Birds brought seeds. From  
rotting mosses frond and leaf

Sprang to life. The palm trees' rustle down the  
tradewind's courses ran

Waiting, calling, night and morning till a home was  
made for man.

Law unchanging sank an island, raised another in-  
stantly.

Earthquake travail tore the planet; land was lifted  
from the sea.

Polyps toiled, and life subaqueous hurled through  
chaos blindly eyed

Light and sky it was not made for, saw its God's new  
face and died.

Ages passed. To-day we suffer, strive, and die in  
unsuccess;

Not the tenth submerged alone, but all whose flame of  
life grows less.

Nations pass and form a foothold for the race, and life  
shall grow

Slowly, surely, up to heaven though the mountains be  
brought low.

Nearer light we form this nation. Variation has  
attained

Newer types and larger, freer; corals bloodshot  
branched and brained.

Comes or stays the storm, the earthquake; rending,  
slaying, surely we  
Serve the race that rises slowly like the coral from the  
sea.

Island life is still before us. Wider vistas wait our  
eyes.

Mountain-tops of light whose beacons star the oceans  
of the skies.

*Paris, 12' 3 '08.*

## THE FRONTIERSMEN

YOU say the days of pioneers are past, the last  
frontier is lost, is wiped away;  
That earth is fettered fast in steel at last; life grows  
more tame and cruel every day;  
That Drake and Raleigh's work on earth is done, that  
Boone and Crockett's like no more we breed;  
To younger planets nearer to the sun they have gone  
on on trails untrod to bleed.  
It may be so with them. It is not so with us their  
father's sons who usher in  
The noonday of the race. The fairest hours for fight-  
ing men and pioneers begin.  
Earth grows more crowded daily. Greater odds are  
ours to count, to weigh, to charge, to rout,  
To blaze our trails through. In our cities' slums our  
pathfinders through savagery shall scout,  
We felled the forest once and laid it low. We swept  
its lurking perils from our path.  
We loosed the floods. To-day till trees shall grow we  
must rear up new walls against their wrath.  
We must drive back the desert, stem the seas. Our  
engineers go pioneering still.  
Our surgeons war with danger and disease. They  
reinforce the long beleaguered will.

Life has come near its limits on one plane. But life  
 that never pauses learns to rise.  
 Skyscraper floors our footing find again. Our air-  
 ships seek the frontiers of the skies.  
 We must dig deeper. In our darkest mines, in depths  
 below the tenth submerged we hear  
 Rumors of fire damp. In these close confines is born  
 the master courage kin to fear.  
 We run and leap. The records still go down. We  
 train; the body's limits still extend.  
 We make machines more subtle, swift, and strong;  
 our powers are multiplied without an end.  
 We roll up riches till our money kings are stronger  
 than the emperors of old;  
 Nor lands nor seas their frontiers, stronger things, the  
 whole world's hunger and its lust for gold.  
 Earth's our arena. So our bodies strive. Fit to sur-  
 vive our stronger sons are born,  
 And fairer daughters. Love is still alive. His lists  
 are wide; his barriers night and morn.  
 The mind's dominions widen. Furthest stars are  
 scanned and weighed. Our eyes adventure there.  
 The chemist's skill unlocks the atom's bars. The  
 lonely scouts of science sweep the air.  
 They go beyond. They tread the trails of space.  
 They war with germs without us and within.  
 They shall dissect the nerve, the brain, the soul. They  
 prove disease and madness one with sin.  
 They hypnotize the dull subconscious will, extend its  
 borders, and record its laws.  
 So shall the master healers of mankind awake the  
 world that slumbers to the cause

## The Frontiersmen

We all must fight for; scout and pioneer, painter clear-eyed, and singer sounding true.

Teacher and preacher; till the last frontier our spirits near, and heaven is ours to view.

*Paris, 12' 10 '09.*

## THE CHAIR

YOU shall no longer stand among your fellow men.  
And all your hands from life have wrung lies  
shrunk then  
To that lone place beside its board, the seat of horror  
where  
The headman is your host and lord. They strap you  
to the chair,  
From shrinking flesh the wrappings roll, the cold  
electrodes lay,  
Like serpents' coils that crush your soul. You seem  
to swoon away.—  
This is our Moloch's altar grim, since blood for blood  
still cries,  
And since your eyes untaught were dim you are our  
sacrifice,  
Our hostage that we dare to rack, our scapegoat cast  
Into the pit whence none comes back. Night's wilder-  
ness at last  
Shall be more kind to you than us, who slowly day by  
day  
In slums and sweatshops murderous that profits pay,  
Your like by thousands doom to death. No shape of  
terror sits  
To still the shudders of your breath and soothe the  
soul that flits.  
Death the old mother in her arms shall clasp you till  
Your spirit rests from life's alarms and slumbers still.

*Paris, 11' 11 '08.*

## V—THE CITY

### MIDNIGHT—THE WAITING-ROOM—JERSEY CITY

THIS is the vestibule. A continent  
Opens outside these westward swinging doors.  
Ever the sound of footsteps on the floors  
Quickens and swells. Anon the wave is spent.

Rank after rank arisen over seas  
Along the foreshore black of night they break.  
Rank after rank of soldiers half awake  
They march to make to-morrow's destinies.

Some halt. Some pace like restless sentinels.  
And through the stormy clangor of the trains  
A mother lulls her babe in tender strains.  
And unawares the whole world's secret tells.

*New York, 7' 11 '03.*

## THE SKYSCRAPERS

WHEN earth outgrew her limits she made a  
mountain range.

She drew her lines of cleavage. She suffered stress  
and change.

She raised her floods of lava high until the snow-peaks  
rose

To flash the signals of the sky; its dawns and after-  
glows.

We have no eyes to see them, who crowd the market  
place.

But the same long cosmic pressure is strong to mould  
the race.

And every wave and every train that rolls o'er land  
and sea

Evokes a folk migration to a land of liberty.

There was neither space nor grace for them in the  
cities old of men,

Their lords devoured their substance. They took the  
trail again.

And while they come to swell the crowd that struggles  
here to rise

Above their Babel hoarse and loud these towers assail  
the skies.

## The Skyscrapers

They are the spars we raise to-day of mighty scaffold-  
ing.

They are the piers unfinished of to-morrow that shall  
bring

Order at last from chaos; out of the struggle blind  
A vision of the purpose that our building has designed.

They have grown with the rising of the race, like the  
growth of trees and grain,

That stakes its claim in the heart of space. Sorrow  
and toil and pain,

Its aspirations high and prayers, have raised them here  
to be

The foot rules of its will that dares to scale infinity.

Here where the faults are focussed the lava surges  
through.

Out of the soul's corruption the spirit builds anew  
Beneath the lifted ladders where the workmen slowly  
climb,

The broad and strong foundations of a city more  
sublime.

*New York, 9' 10 '09.*

## THE HIGHWAY

LIFE is motion, never ending pilgrimage through  
paths of space.

Here the feet of men forgotten trod the trail that leads  
the race

Past these lights to make the stars its milestones  
towards its dwelling-place.

All the shadows of the city wake to watch the arc lights  
blaze

Where Broadway is made a mirror of a myriad Milky  
Ways.

Here the heart of all the heavens beats on earth while  
dawn delays.

Here a nebula is lucent. Millions of its atoms swarm  
Where the nodule of a nation finds its evanescent  
form.

Here the soul that is eternal lights a fire its flesh to  
warm.

Endless atoms in their orbits, endless germs of life, and  
light

Swirl and form a flaming vortex where each arc light's  
beams are bright.

Endless eyes that wake to watch them out of inter-  
stellar night,

## The Highway

Gaze unseeing; on unending errands through creation  
go.

Men that chart the curves of ions, life's electrons learn  
to know,

Blind their brothers in the blackness where they hurtle  
to and fro.

Life is light that flames, and falling flows through  
space in fiery waves.

Stars shine here that died when first the Pharaohs  
piled their granite graves.

Here the life of ancient Egypt makes to-day its lords  
and slaves.

Life is rhythm, the measured marching of the armies  
of the dead

Down the trail that all must follow through the dark-  
ness far ahead.

Here they made it hard, enduring, underneath the  
ages' tread.

Here the crowding millions marching, countermarch-  
ing faster past

Camps and cities, plant their torches on a frontier  
dark and vast;

Build Life's road, make straight His way, until His  
triumph comes at last.

*New York, 7' 7 '09.*

## HERALD SQUARE

YOU who have felt the pressure and made good,  
Who cold and hungry heard the presses thunder;  
And watched with eyes that little understood,  
Sheet after sheet show white, and double under;  
And saw beside you there some face of wood,  
Some well-clad idler's stare of vacant wonder;

Clubman, collegian, child or priest or maid:  
Have you not envied them their careless faces,  
Their lives untried, untainted, unafraid;  
Their linen white? These are the printless spaces,  
The margins for your mark. His ink may fade,  
God's sheet moves on. You would not change your  
places.

*New York, 6' 8 '06.*

## THE FACTORY WHISTLES

THE night is rent by sudden hoarse alarms.  
The dawn has barely tinged the winter skies  
Where trails of smoke from grimy chimneys rise  
When labor's bugles call a world to arms.

Through squalid streets the army takes its way,  
Childhood and age are sad together there,  
No thrill of hope the stolid faces wear,  
As bleak before them breaks the barren day.

They wage a hopeless war without redress.  
Their leaders false, they fight not for their own.  
Delight and hours of ease they have not known.  
Still to the strife their columns onward press.

*New York, 5' 16 '99.*

## THE ARENA

THEY have raised the seats of the mighty around  
the City Hall

Where Nero sits in office and taxes great and small.  
And the nation's vast arena around the place is ranged,  
For we are the heirs of the Romans. In little are we  
changed.

Bread and the circus crying, the multitudes begin  
To fill these tiers at daybreak. And still for those  
that win

We shout and we shoulder nearer, and still turn down  
our thumbs

And doom to death the vanquished. And the sound  
of our shouting comes

From the curb where we crowd the closest to the last  
skyscraper's floor,

And the millionaires' high altar of the wealth we all  
adore.

Day after day when sunset has glorified the west  
We go our ways unseeing, and we win us little rest.  
With the lusts of place and mastery and money still  
we strive:

These are the beasts we battle with to save our souls  
alive.

Year after year the springtime awakens earth from sleep:

And the world grows warm with summer while our hard won hoards we keep.

And our hearts grow hard and colder. And the flowers and the children's smiles,

And the dreams that we dreamed in boyhood grow dim. And the weary miles

Of life's hard highway lengthen. No other goal we know

But the gate of the great arena, and the seat in the highest row.

Yet are there visions that gleam awhile down the vistas gray of years,

Strains of some vagrant music that summon unshed tears,

Faces seen on a ferry like the loves that might not be,  
Wind through the office window with its word of the open sea.

We who must die salute Thee, Lord of the lives of all.

We are Thy gladiators, Thy purpose holds in thrall.

Nearer we march each morning from our prison to the night

When we hear the end of the shouting and we sink in the last grim fight.

And the moon looks down at midnight on a crater bare and cold;

Hard as our hearts that have builded it, and as sad and stern and old.

*Paris, 11' 11 '08.*

## THE CRUCIBLE

HERE by the borders of the sea and land,  
The fingers of an everlasting hand  
Have traced these streets like furrows in the sand.

The heat and burden of the day are done.  
Out of the west the embers of the sun  
Are raked; unchecked the streams of pleasure run.

A crucible of molten life is spilled  
Upon the pavement; every mould is filled,  
And souls inert to sudden heat are thrilled.

The arc lights glimmer in a flaming line,  
At playhouse portals lurid letters shine,  
And jewels gleam like bubbles born of wine,

These are but sparks that fleck the surface. Slow,  
Deep in the shadows, in the slag below,  
Hardens and cools the crust of want and woe.

Doubt and distress and poverty and pain,  
Fear and despair and shame that sears the brain,  
All fused to fever heat, grow cold again.

In the cool silence of His hours of sleep  
He shapes our prayers, the trysts that lovers keep,  
Triumphs and trials, and tears that women weep.

Tempered in sorrow, tested not for long,  
Under the sledges of His shapes of wrong!  
In night's black smithy shall His steel grow strong.

This day a million mortals marred, shall He  
Fashion His fragment of eternity  
Into the pattern of the days to be.

*New York, 9' 14 '07.*

## THE SWITCH YARD

OUT of the glimmer of arc lights and spaces of  
shade,  
Far on the frontier the city has won from the dark,  
Rails in the moonlight in ribbons of silver are laid,  
Eyes that are watchful the loom of the switch yard  
shall mark,  
Ears that are keen to its music shall hark.

Red, green and gold are the signals that mark the  
design.  
Black is the ground where the work of the weaver is  
spread.  
Bright in the night is the glittering length of the line,  
Swiftly and smoothly and strongly the shuttles are  
sped  
Bringing and braiding and breaking the thread.

Clicking of switches and resonant rolling of wheels  
Mix in the midnight with stifled escape of the steam.  
Down the long siding a shadowed shape silently steals,  
Sudden it checks; and the gride of the brakes is a  
scream,  
The sound of a rent in the stuff of the dream.

Stars in their courses in switch yards of uttermost  
space,

Thrills in the ether that galaxies, systems, obey  
Meshes immortal of motion and matter to trace;  
Feel as they reel and they race down Heaven's per-  
manent way

Past the tall signal tower holding the void in survey.

*New York, 2' 10 '04.*

## THE MORaine

LOOK down love from the Bridge's height  
And see the buildings piled below,  
A heap of pebbles in the night  
Where stars like fireflies come and go.

Here by the border of the sea  
Where life has left its last moraine,  
The soul of man eternally  
Resigns its pleasure and its pain.

The glacier glides into the deep,  
An endless river of the years,  
From the far mountains where they sleep  
Who first begot our hopes and fears.

Cave-man, Crusader, scientist,  
They pass as pass the centuries;  
And teach these stones to still persist  
To tally time's infinities.

What does it all mean? Aeons dear  
Have left Manhattan here to-day  
That we might meet. Our home is here  
To share with others while we may.

*New York, 8' 29 '09.*

## THE CLOCK IN THE AIR

HIGH on Manhattan's tallest tower  
The clock keeps watch and tells the hour.  
The chimes ring out their reveille.  
The city wakes, and turns to see  
Its campanile's shaft of white  
Against the sunrise. All the night  
It points its finger at the sky.

All day the multitudes march by;  
While like a skylark's song there falls  
To waken souls in prison walls  
To thoughts of meadows far away  
From dusty rooms that hide the day;  
Of snowpeaks and the open sea;  
Of all the city's symphony  
This note supernal and supreme  
Teaching the toilers how to dream.

*New York, 8' 25 '09.*

## VI—THE INNER LIFE

### THE CITY OF DREAMS

I N the distant lands of dreaming  
Stands a city on a hillside  
High upborne by cloudy bulwarks,  
All by endless light illumined.  
Happy are its hopeless people  
For their fears are all forgotten.  
There they know nor noon nor daybreak,  
Sun nor shadow, care nor joy.  
Every night I climb that mountain,  
Seek and struggle unavailing,  
Scale the steep, assail the hillside,  
Baffled, blinded, faint and fail.  
Every hour there flit before me  
Visions of unearthly beauty,  
Gentle glances, smiles undying,  
Tears that time has kissed away.  
Sometimes standing in the gateway,  
Halting on the very threshold,  
Held enthralled by strains celestial,  
I have seemed to see her face;  
Dreamed I kissed her garment's hem,  
Deemed she drifted ever nearer;  
Then the gates have crashed together  
On a waking world of pain.

*New York, 4' 21 '03.*

## THE DREAM

LEST we forget the mountain peaks to-day,  
The fields of freedom where the children play,  
The fragrance of the garden dim with dawn,  
The years of youth that down to dust have gone;  
Here in the noonday's burden and its heat,  
The glare, the roar, the riot of the street;  
Cloudlike the dream shall come, and in its shade  
Sad lips shall smile, faint hearts grow unafraid,  
Dull eyes shall brighten. There shall we forget  
Failures and frauds and custom's ceaseless threat,  
The barren triumphs and the tainted gold,  
Safety and honor crumbling in our hold.  
We will remember loveliness and peace,  
Beauty and joy that were not born to cease,  
Kisses of children pure as crystal springs,  
Voice of the spirit where a skylark sings,  
Sunset and snow, and forest, field and sea;  
Watchfires of stars that guard eternity;  
Heaven here on earth, ours in one woman's eyes.  
While these endure the dream that never dies  
Under our ashes stirs and flames anew.  
All these, our allies, ranged in long review  
While with the crowd we struggled, passed unseen.  
We have been blind, nor is our honor clean;

We have known weakness, shame, unfaith and sin.  
Much have we wasted. Had we wiser been  
We should have less to win still; less to share.  
Beyond the dream our own are waiting there.

*Sydney, 2' 28 '09.*

## THE IDOL

THOUGH you find her feet but clay,  
Though they trample on your heart,  
Kiss nor spurn them yet, but pray  
They may learn to play their part,  
Strive to find for them the way.

Take your idol, raise her high.  
Blend her with your best ideal,  
Let her forehead feel the sky  
Though the rest of her be real.  
Kneel and toil and testify.

*This is she that might have been,  
Such am I and by her grace,  
Scourged by failure, folly, sin ;  
In the promise of her face  
Sure that better years begin.*

Guard her as your polestar there,  
Sweet and true and half a child,  
Unfulfilled, forever fair,  
Till your pain is reconciled  
With the strength that marks despair.

Hold her high and climb to her,  
Till your worship wins its own;  
Though no pulse of passion stir,  
Tears and kisses too, unknown;  
Till her eyes your crown confer.

*S. S. Medic, 1' 20 '09.*

## FREEDOM

MEN are born free and equal? These are lies,  
We were born slaves to free ourselves and rise.  
Slaves to the passions of ten thousand years,  
The lusts that died; the bitter, barren tears.  
We were born warriors. In each human skin  
Battle the germs of sickness, shame and sin,  
Of death and life; of error and of truth,  
And none shall hold his citadel of youth,  
Inviolat at all hours day and night.  
The foe shall enter and the soul shall fight—  
Surprised, outnumbered, beaten to the ground,  
By its best friends betrayed; and blinded, bound,  
Bleeding and dying: or resurgent, strong,  
Indomitable, grim, besieged by wrong,  
Hungered, athirst, unsleeping and alone;  
Relieved at last by forces not its own.  
Freedom is warfare. There your brother stands,  
Smiles till he takes his life with his own hands,  
You were too blind, too shrewd, too weak; afraid,  
His soul's frontiers to force, invade and aid—  
The arch-foe's stolen city to retake.  
Freedom is wisdom loved for wisdom's sake.  
Efficiency, the science hardly won,  
By struggling ages, work well planned, well done,

Freedom is love that keeps its altar clean,  
City and home and nation; fire unseen  
Or flaming beacon, for one purpose trained.  
Freedom is service; strongest when constrained.  
Ranged with its ranks alone your souls shall be  
Heirs of the freedom of the hills and sea.

*Paris, 12' 21 '08.*

## THE COUNTERSIGN

THERE is one talent it is death to hide,  
God's self can pardon not, the suicide  
Of flesh and soul that thwarts His Holy Ghost.  
Self-sentenced dies the sentry at his post  
Who sleeps and sinks beside the dark frontier  
Of truth and error. Midnight's mists of fear  
Assail thy spirit. Hardly shalt thou pace  
The weary rounds of loneliness, and face  
The shapes that stalk thee. Pluck thy burning brand  
From truth's camp-fire. The brute that cannot stand  
Slinks back and bides his time. And so must thou.

But if in man's own shape it fronts thee; now  
Summon thy strength's reserves, thy challenge cry,  
"Stand thou and speak, or one of us shall die."  
Hast thou well loved her, has the crisis come?  
Her soul and thine shall die if both be dumb.  
Is thy friend strong and blind? Then thou must pray,  
Wrestle and win, or trampled into clay  
Give up thy breath in honor. Even so  
Jacob with angels strove; and from the glow  
Of Nero's gardens, martyr torches flamed  
To light our way. God's purpose is not shamed,  
Thwarted nor darkened by our sins to-day.

We all, our nation's destinies may sway.  
We who have grace to lead our fellow-men,  
Guard or destroy; the gift of tongue or pen,  
Power or wealth, or science; insight, art;  
Pandors or prophets, all must stand apart:  
Out of our hour of darkness call, or fall,  
*Are you for truth or treason to us all?*

*Paris, 11' 21 '08.*

## THE REAL THING

**Y**ES, you're down, you're dazed, you're sore.  
But you'll get up again.

Take the count and watch his arm if you've got head  
enough.

If the girl's gone and she never will come back, alive,  
There're as good as she on earth still. On my word  
there are.

If it's money, you'll make more. The world is full  
of it,

Full of people simply waiting to give up to you.

If it's drink, there's time to sidestep till the final  
round,

If you're sick and sad, the better times are bound to  
come.

If you're hungry, there are others that are hungrier,  
If you've lost a friend forever you'll get next to him  
Just by making other friends like him and keeping  
them,

If it's death itself you're facing, so's the world as well.  
If he can't be countered longer, every one of us  
Soon or late must go against the big black heavy-  
weight.

He's your sparring partner merely. If he knocks  
you out

It 's because your trainer simply thinks you need a rest.

So it 's up to you to show him you 're no quitter yet. Other rings in heaven or hell there are you're scheduled for

Where you 've got to go against the real thing, sometime, soon or late.

Men like you have landed knockouts in defeat's own face.

Get one blow in first. Last one round more, for God's sake, man.

*Paris, 12' 21 '08.*

## IGDRASIL

“**E**XISTENCE is a tree,” the Norsemen said.  
Silent it grows through all eternity,  
Each branch a nation, every leaf a life.  
Death is the wind that comes and shakes the leaves.  
We know not whence it comes nor where it goes,  
Nor what it is, nor why at times it breathes  
So soft the withered leaves alone must fall;  
Nor why, again, its blasts shake all the tree,  
And boughs are reft away, and leaves still green  
Are whirled through farthest space. Nor can we tell  
How buds this life of ours, and how it fades,  
What is the nourishment its roots receive,  
And what the blasting sources of decay.  
We only know we are, and then are not;  
While, soft or fierce, forever blows the wind;  
And silent grows the tree, eternally.

*Hartford, 10' 3 '93.*

## LOVE LETTERS OF AN EVOLUTIONIST XI

LOVE, let me hold you close while light is ours.  
Not in the night's mad rapture are we near.  
Siegfried the strong in song has made it clear  
A sword most sharp divides the marriage bed.  
We may not forge in passion's furnace red  
Bonds that shall hold while cold the spirit cowers.

Within the mirrors twin your eyes uplift  
I see my own true image near and plain.  
At noon's high tide a moment we remain,  
Then shadows lengthen into weary years.  
Flesh knit to flesh with kisses and with tears  
Death shall divide, and time make wide the rift.

How shall we hold together, heart of gold?  
Death is a sword of steel most bitter keen.  
How shall we fare through farthest stars unseen  
Beyond the black abysm of space to meet?  
Love, shall the lips whose touch is piercing sweet  
Whisper one word when life in us lies cold?

Shall instinct blind that brings the birds again  
Back from the winter to last summer's nest  
Be strong to bid our love survive the test?  
Have we not lost the scent of forest things?  
Hath hope unbent the spirit's slackened wings?  
Shall faith in longing spent forget forever pain?

How shall we know that all is not a lie?  
More dear than life itself I hold you, dear.  
Here in this word is heard a word of cheer,  
Since at your feet my life I 'd gladly lay  
God must be good to give and take away,  
And pay again the price beyond the sky.

*New York, 8' 14 '04.*

## THE PORTRAIT

TO paint a portrait of her that would live  
Longer than Raphael's fairest Mother of God,  
This is the task that I have set myself.  
And I shall fail. For I should have to blend  
All of the flowers that make this old world fair,  
All of the dawns and sunsets of the ages,  
To fix the changing color of her face.  
And I should want the wind that sways the grain  
To show the way she comes to welcome me;  
And all the lights and shadows of the ocean  
In storm and sunshine, to suggest her eyes.  
As for the soul that wakes and slumbers there,  
That wavers round her lips like living music,  
Near and elusive, I should have to borrow  
The dreams of poets, and the hearts of heroes,  
That leap to war with wrong instinctively;  
All of the joys and sorrows of the city  
Wherein she lives and learns and lifts a torch  
To honor and her pilgrims. I should need  
The tenderness of lovers and of mothers,  
The insight half divine that heals the sick,  
Redeems the fallen, makes the feeble strong,  
And every one more glad, that looks on her,  
Night's mystery and noon's unsullied light,  
To make her real to eyes that may not see.

## The Portrait

She is more true and vital than myself,  
And though no canvas ever can contain her  
In every man's hard heart she lives immortal,  
Ideal, like Galatea masked in stone;  
Till time the sculptor sets her free forever.

*New York, 10' 14 '09.*

## DREAM CHILDREN

BY winter firesides have they most been missing,  
O maiden mother with the withered breast?  
Neath summer starlight have you felt their kissing  
Soft in the shadow by the breeze caressed?  
Then have they grown to crown each gracious shoulder,  
Wings of the spirit that a seraph seems,  
Arms of the mother love that grows not older,  
Strength of the weak that bears the babes of dreams?

Have you been wise, to see the sordid city  
Cruel and vast and sick with suffering;  
Out of the ardent passion of your pity  
Learning the light to languid eyes to bring?  
Have you been strong to cast your arms around them,  
Harlot and thief and widow sore bereft;  
Making each child your own where'er you found them,  
Stilling the throb of pain while life was left?

Sister of sin and shame and all who sorrow,  
Prophet and priest and fighting man forspent;  
We who must toil to-day to build to-morrow  
Out of the ruins of our discontent;  
We who must strive to stir the love whose leaven  
Quickens alone the life naught else redeems;  
This is our surest proof and pledge of heaven,  
Children whose smiles we only see in dreams.

*Paris, 4' 22 '08.*

## VII—THE WEST

### THE GUN

I AM the Anglo-Saxon's second tongue.  
I was the ultimate word of your nation young,  
When Standish marched and his cannon stood  
On the meeting-house roof to rake the wood,  
And the Ironside grandsires slew, their prayers among.

I was the frontier's call and countersign,  
When the pioneers deployed their fighting line,  
And the forest fell before their stern assault;  
And the Union rose and marched nor stayed to halt,  
And life was brave and free, and death divine.

I was the soul that woke at Lexington,  
That spoke at Yorktown till the work was done,  
That echoed back the roar of Waterloo,  
That Wellington's most seasoned soldiers slew  
And saw the Mississippi crimson run.

I was the voice that swelled at Sumter's fall  
Northward and Eastward, Westward, rousing all;  
Until a million men in battle stood;  
And Freedom's charter by their blood made good,  
Struck off the shackles from the alien thrall.

I was the herald of the Golden West.  
I woke the voiceless echoes, fired the quest.  
I spoke for Sitting Bull, Geronimo.  
From lava beds to peaks of crimsoned snow  
I wrote the Red Man's last red fighting test.

I am the court supreme of last appeal,  
When bombshells burst o'er frontiers carved with  
    steel,  
Whether from Prussia, Africa, Japan;  
If ye shall breed no more your fighting man,  
Chastened and suppliant, sentenced ye shall kneel.

*Honolulu, 4' 27 '09.*

## THE FLOODS

AGES on countless ages the forest slowly grew,  
And we came in clouds from the ocean, and  
the raindrops filtered through  
The living screen of the branches as they sifted light  
and shade.  
And the winds of heaven whispered through the twilight  
we had made.

And the deer through the glades went gliding below;  
and high above  
The birds in their nesting echoed the Indian's songs  
of love,  
And we ran in a limpid river and we spread in the  
placid lake,  
Where canoes that steal like shadows scarcely a ripple  
make.

And you came and you brought your discords to the  
forest's symphony.  
And we heard the sound of the axes and the crash of  
the falling tree,  
And the strident gride of the saw-mill, and the railroad's  
whistle shrill,  
And the roar of the burning forest where once the  
world was still.

Since you have spoiled our handiwork and idle strength  
set free,

And the waters rise in the springtime as the sap swells  
in the tree;

You shall fly from our futile fury and our havoc wide  
repair.

We are the strength of the nation's youth your haste  
has wasted there.

In the noonday's heat and burden the earth is rent  
and scarred,

Gutted and gashed with gullies like the lives your  
hands have marred.

And the sandy barrens widen. In a world devoid of  
shade

Fire and famine follow us through the desert you have  
made.

You have taken peace from the people; beauty and  
joy and ease.

You have built them huts of timber where once were  
growing trees.

Though we turn ten thousand spindles where the  
river dwindles lean,

Can we weave a cloak for your nakedness like the  
forest's robe of green?

Vainly you darken your city's streets, and steel on  
stone-work pile,

While you bare the flanks of the mountains and our  
sources pure defile.

You have wounded the world and wasted it. And  
your sons shall bear the scars,

## The Floods

And shall starve where the arclights glitter and their  
dazzle hides the stars.

You must sow the seeds of the spirit. You must  
plant the trees again  
For the sake of your children's children and the  
pleasant sound of rain.

*Paris, 11' 12 '08.*

## GRAIN

LIGHT was reft from darkness, land and sea  
appeared.

One unchanging purpose wide the field surveyed.  
Strange chaotic forms of life lusted, slew and feared,  
Hungered, died and fertilized the soil that love had  
made.

Glaciers plowed the prairies, rivers rose and ran.  
Earth was robed in verdure. Slowly grew the grain  
Toward to-day's perfection. And so the mind of  
man  
Learned to plow and sow and reap and garner home  
again.

Here the soil primeval lay till yesterday,  
Virgin, fair, and spared a new-born nation's need to  
feed,  
Here the happy hunting grounds where men might  
love and slay  
Nursed the childhood of the race nor knew the taint  
of greed.

Flowers filled the plains with light. Dusky bison  
hordes

On their last migration passed. Red men, pioneers  
Into silence followed them. And so this earth affords  
Food for famished millions and a storehouse for the  
years:

Counters for your corners, money for your lust,  
Rations for the regiments of tyranny and pain.  
Fertile, fair and undefiled for righteous and unjust  
Grows the nation's sacrament of sunshine turned to  
grain.

Reapers shear the Golden Fleece. Threshers winnow  
fine.

Mills shall grind it into dust, and men the seed shall  
sow.

Death and resurrection and service, all divine,  
From its daily bread of toil the world shall grow to  
know.

Leagues of flame aspiring, waves of living light,  
Sway across the plains. The winds like seraphs stoop  
again,

Hold their breath adoring before the wondrous sight,  
Heaven's golden floor on earth, a glory wrought of  
grain.

*Paris, 11' 19 '09.*

## THE CANYON

GOD opened here His folded book  
That men might read. He scored each wall  
Where snows of myriad winters fall  
And wasting, waste the stubborn rock  
Whose beetling fringes overlook  
The sullen torrent's surge and shock.

Each noon He bids His sun bow down  
To utter deeps where far below  
The fallen waters restless flow.  
Each night His stars are mirrored there.  
And where His crags unbending frown  
He sets His flowers to make them fair.

*Royal Gorge, 1' 16 '04.*

## THE SNOW PEAKS

THE hills are bowed about their feet,  
The plains lie prone and far below.  
They lift their hands their Lord to greet  
In sacerdotal robes of snow.

Shades unassoiled their matins throng  
When sunrise lights its candles high,  
And cloudy incense trails along  
The eastern altar of the sky.

The roll of thunder's organ tone  
Their silences of noon has stirred.  
To their enduring hearts of stone  
The storm winds preach a holy word.

Strict vigil through the dark they keep.  
Through night's tall temple windows they  
While all the world is wrapped in sleep  
The stars of heaven behold and pray.

*New York, 7' 2 '99.*

## THE ROOSEVELT DAM

WE set our symbol at our valley's gates  
Where the floods rushed together. Strong it  
stands

To bar their way. The alien from all lands  
Shall come to marvel where this bulwark waits:

Shall see the silent majesty of law,  
The bridge that binds the high heroic past  
To that more lofty future, that at last  
Shall test our building, every fault and flaw.

Already in its shadow slowly rise  
Waters once wasted that at last shall flow  
To bring the mountains near and melting snow  
To desert ranches drear and rainless skies.

And you whose purpose would the clouds compel,  
For whom all rivers run, all oceans bear  
More to your mountain; master-millionaire  
Shall you not learn to serve and so do well?

*Paris, 11' 12 '08.*

## THE STAMPS

THE crash of our anvil chorus reëchoes day by  
day,

And the rocks go down before us and the mountains  
melt away.

We are keeping time, we are marking step till the  
army onward tramps.

And the sway and the surge of labor's hosts is the war-  
song of the stamps.

They have prisoned powers of thunder to swing our  
hammer heads;

And the earth for an anvil under have set, and the  
watersheds

Where the rocks are piled, and the foot-hills heaped,  
and the ranges upward roll

In stark Titanic stonework of the watch towers of the  
soul.

And our iron roll unending rings long across the  
night.

With a roar and a sound of rending we drum you to  
the fight,

And the new recruits in double shifts come hurrying  
to our call

To the fort of life beleaguered by the shades that wait  
for all.

And we fall and flail the strong and true from the dross  
that drifts away.

This is the task we share with you to shake the soul  
from clay.

And our ammunition trains roll out. And the cities'  
scattered camps

Are reinforced, and each weak redoubt, by the powder  
from the stamps.

*Paris, 11' 16 '08.*

## THE DESERT

HERE long ago beneath a leaden sky  
Titans and devils strove in leaguer vast.  
On mesas lone their scarped entrenchments lie  
In broken ranks that witness to the past.  
And the low foot-hills rise in shallow waves  
To make a multitude of giants' graves.

Here heaven's siege guns thunder sullen still.  
The baffled lightnings stab the barren sand.  
Here lurks the rattlesnake and strikes to kill,  
The cactus sentinels an arid land.  
Like tears that women shed in pain in vain,  
There falls the broken promise of the rain.

And here twin threads of steel have traced the trail  
That man must follow on to victory.  
Here must he toil however nature fail;  
The mountains' secret water springs set free,  
Till children smile where'er a garden grows  
To see the desert blossom like the rose.

*New York, 10' 30 '03.*

## THE FLUME

THEY killed five hundred years of life,  
Butchered the red wood into planks.  
And higher still they raised their knife  
And scarred the mountain's hoary flanks,  
Smothered a waterfall in gloom,  
And stilled its music in the flume.

And still the water limpid flows  
Unresting, rapid all the way;  
And brings the chill of melted snows  
To cool the plains that parch to-day;  
And from the hillside's citadel  
Sends succor to a city's hell.

And light flames forth where light was not.  
And power transmitted, life transfused  
In surgeon's cauteries is hot.  
And nature's vital force is used  
To sear and scar and sterilize  
The sickness that unsuccored dies.

The water murmurs through the flume  
Since we have stabbed the mountain's veins  
And made our mother's strength assume  
The burden of our sins and pains.  
But the great Surgeon surely knows  
Why love that falls unfailing flows.

*Paris, 11' 19 '08.*

## THE REDMAN

OUT of the dark and bloody soil  
That colored red his human clay,  
Out of Kentucky's wild turmoil  
He learned to trail and slay.

We felled the forest o'er his head,  
We spoiled his hunting, stole his home,  
O'er prairies bare, untenanted  
We drove him forth to roam.

He is our brother Ishmael.  
As Israel dealt with Hagar's son,  
Outcast, at war with all to dwell,  
So have our soldiers done.

Out of the mountain's last retreat  
Where rattlesnakes on lava lurk,  
Out of the desert's hoarded heat  
Where gold calls man to work;

We forced him fighting to the last.  
We ringed him round from sea to sea,  
A smear of red upon our past,  
To-day, and time to be.

## The Redman

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For the same harsh environment  
That made him subtle, restless, grim,  
Unsparring to the innocent,  
Has fashioned us like him.

So we have lost our last frontier,  
Our epic red from coast to coast.  
And merciless, who know no fear,  
The victors suffer most.

*Paris, 12' 28 '08.*

## VIII—POLEMICS

### THE EXPATRIATES

YOU call us all expatriates because we stay away,  
And are n't convinced that work per se's more  
sane always than play.  
You get the habit, use your minds for muscles, motors,  
scales,  
To weigh the money value of to-day that stands or  
fails.  
Earth shuts you up in motor cells of its big brain of  
steel.  
Here we 've perspective, atmosphere. We find the  
time to feel,  
To criticise, interpret art's historic loveliness,  
We all are heirs to. Are you sure we love our country  
less?  
Not more? We 're frank to-day; we are deserters  
from the cause  
Of truth and freedom there at home; enforcement of  
just laws,  
Impartial, wise, efficient; like you whose breathless  
haste  
Has glutted you with power you waste like wealth  
your women waste.  
Barbarians all, like dynamos, like soulless summer  
flies.

They come abroad and shame us in the whole of  
Europe's eyes.  
Your work at home defrauds our sons, together with  
your own,  
And men shall rise against you. And when that hour  
is known  
And earth's last revolution breaks the trusts your  
lusts abuse  
We will come home and fight you or with you as you  
choose.  
We hate your noise, your blatant boasts, your swagger,  
glitter, greed.  
Your yellow journal's creed we read: "At any cost  
succeed."  
We love our country most because we see her faults  
and yours,  
And underneath the purpose strong that freedom still  
insures;  
That crowds earth's bargain counters and the sales  
you advertise,  
Drummers of loud prosperity and watered stock and  
lies.  
America's not there nor here, it's everywhere to-day,  
It wakes the world, its last frontier finds savagery at  
bay,  
In darkest Russia, Africa, Manhattan darker yet,  
Where fouler tyranny than Rome's you tax or else  
forget.  
America's a state of mind, a mission of the soul.  
Show us the way to win it. We'll race you to our  
goal.

*Paris, 12' 3 '08.*

## MONEY

WHAT will you do with it? What will it do,  
What has it done, is it doing with you?  
Nations have fought and died; sages have thought,  
Heaped up your heritage. Ages have wrought  
Strength for your children, their duty and dower,  
Wealth, obligation and peril and power.  
Waste it, you waste yourselves; hoard it, you shrink  
Will muscles dwindle, and minds fail to think.  
Let it alone. It mounts up like a flood,  
Filth from your tenements; God's flesh and blood  
Racked in your railroad wrecks, maimed in your  
mills.

You are inertia that crushes and kills,  
Moves through its weight; is blind. More you are  
mind.

Either to stifle man's spirit resigned  
Or its sworn champion. Dwindle or grow.  
This is your talent who no others know.  
Give it away and your hands are not clean,  
More than were Pilate's. You serve the machine,  
You who should rule it. You shall not be safe.  
Duty means danger. Your spirit shall chafe,  
Grapple the levers (as eyes grasp the goal),  
Ride on past wrecks to the heights of the soul.

Perilous, strait, is the path past the pit.  
This is environment. Are you unfit?  
Freedom means service. You hold in your hands  
Blood of the martyrs, your nation that stands,  
Rises or falls; all the essence of time,  
Millions of lives that shall wallow or climb.  
Fail, the world fails with you. Cheat at its game,  
Those you love best bear their share of the shame.

*Paris, 2' 8 '08.*

## THE BALLOT

WHAT do you make of it? What will you do  
with it?

How do you think that you well will get through with  
it?

Here is the problem life puts in your hands.

What do you know of each name as it stands?

Common report or a newspaper's praises,

Paid for and false, or a lie that amazes,

Damning your friend, or else nothing at all?

Here is our formula. All great and small

Freely shall vote without favor or fear

Govern themselves. Do you find it so here?

Here are the candidates, A, B, and C,

Quantities known, and unknown, Y and Z.

What do you know of them? What will you do with  
them?

Spending each year, scarce one minute or two with  
them?

Many spend less. Are they fools more than you?

Truth shall examine you claiming its due.

Ignorant, blundering, reckless, for sale

Here you walk up to your life's task and fail.

What do you think of them, daughters and wives?

Are these men fit for the race that survives?

Who in one million of you does her share  
Having money and brains and full leisure to spare?  
All of us slaves to a single machine  
Mammon's and Moloch's, to aims crude and mean,  
Breathless and blindly we blunder each day.  
Schoolboys for folly are scourged. So we pay.  
We are in haste and our sons shall pay more.  
Shall they, or shall we yet even the score?  
Or must we wait till these boys in our schools  
Find us out cowards and spendthrifts and fools?

*Paris, 12' 7 '08.*

## THE SANCTUM

**I**S this cell a sanctum? Surely if the devils keep  
Inner shrines in Hell obscurely. Here we never  
sleep.

For a single soul's damnation all the world we scan,  
Throwing mud at all creation, mocking God and man.

Here we hastened for our schooling when our youth  
was white,

Here our evil angels ruling tripped us into night,  
Here the chains of custom hold us, women that we  
wed.

Children's little arms enfold us, lest they lack for  
bread.

Therefore we retail our treason, tell the people lies,  
Print each foul and perjured reason, point each vile  
surmise;

Do the bidding of our masters who their profit take  
From humanity's disasters and its felons make.

Here these narrow walls bear witness to a nation's  
shame,

To a century's unfitness. Here the robbers came,

Here they plotted, here they bartered, here they  
bribed and bought;

Sick and starving millions martyred, strangled love  
and thought.

Woman's secret shame revealing, we do murder here.  
Manhood's honor tricking, stealing; fraud and hate  
and fear,

Servants blind of evolution, wired to this chair  
For a soul's electrocution; find their mouthpiece there.

Here for virtue's vivisection stands this desk, a rack,  
Until lust and greed's infection, isolated, black;  
Yields to truth that strikes unswerving though our  
lesser lives

Pass, their tortured purpose serving. So the race  
survives.

*New York, 10' 18 '09.*

## THE ARMOR BEARERS

L ORD of the levelled lightnings, of battle's thunder  
cloud;  
Thou that dost shake the hearts of men and make  
and break the proud,  
Granting each race and nation grace, each in its space  
allowed:

War in the East is rising. War in the West is rife,  
And the nations gird their armor on to grapple for the  
life,  
Nor shall we stand aloof for long in a world o'er-  
whelmed with strife.

Yellow or brown, or black or white, one race shall  
lead the van.  
And the old gods wake. And the false gods quake.  
Buddha, Mohammed, Pan,  
Come side by side to conquer Christ in the last  
crusades of man.

And the restless city sends us forth to sentinel the  
seas;  
And the iron lusts that spur the North, through peril  
and unease,  
Shepherds of fleets and ocean lanes and lives and  
liberties.

Harlot and thief and money king; their burdens all we  
bear.

Pander and felon, faithless wife, the price we pay they  
share,

They that dare take their profit from a starving child's  
despair.

Therefore we war with sea and storm that we may  
war with men,

Because the blind must lead the blind, the brute be  
mastered when

Thy vials of wrath are emptied out and judgment  
comes again.

We are thine armor bearers, Lord of all power and  
might,

Guarding thine arms till thou shalt leave thy last  
frontier of light

And turn to earth to summon us to Armageddon's  
fight.

Then if our quarrel be unjust when we put out to sea,  
Scapegoats the mob before them thrust their shield  
defaced to be,

Our navies are as drifting dust, and crimsoned clay  
are we.

*San Francisco, 5' 11 '09.*

## SWEAT SHOP CHILDREN

THESE are the little ones of three or four  
Whose infant fingers never learned to play  
Who sit and pluck the basting threads all day;  
Frail strands of life that ravel grimed and gray,  
That fret and fray and fall along the floor,  
In filth and shadow lost are seen no more.

These are the eyes that never learn to smile,  
That see such sunlight as the diver sees,  
Strained through the nether seas where never breeze  
Shall stir the stagnant depths. Of such are these  
Who eye their one dim window blindly while  
As blind their mothers stare, imbruted, vile.

These are the ears that hear no sound of mirth  
Through the black winter's bleak and bitter cold;  
Through the gray days when fog wreathes, fold on fold  
Strangle the acrid air; when women hold  
The babes unblessed that die before their birth,  
In August's Tophet; these defile the earth.

These are the tongues that never learn to tell  
Whisper of love or word of faith or cheer,  
Stories of stars and saints and all things dear,  
How shall they sing whose only faith is fear?  
How shall they love who all in darkness dwell?  
How shall they hope whose only home is hell?

These are the seeds that bear their bitter fruit  
Of pestilence that slays both flesh and soul;  
God's bowstring mutes that bear His fatal scroll.  
Mutely they answer death's unending roll,  
Pander and felon, thief and prostitute.  
Sharing their sentence we shall stand as mute.

*Paris, 12' 1 '08.*

## THE CHILD

YOU who are breathless through your busy day,  
Stay. Have you ever wandered from the way  
To where the houses stoop and sag and crowd,  
Debased and vile? There women cry aloud  
And no man listens. Have you climbed within  
Up the steep stairs of pain and shame and sin,  
And sought to find inside some shadowed room  
A sick child sleeping in the stagnant gloom,  
Whose pallid face and sunken dismal eyes  
Still might grow fair and mirror God's own skies?

Say have you paused to watch your fellow's face  
Near, in the street here, manhood's black disgrace;  
Lips like a sword gash, hard, unsmiling, strong  
In all the iron lusts of greed and wrong;  
Lost to delight and numb to tenderness.  
Dumbly their shame, their failure they confess,  
Like the cold eyes. The drawn and frowning brows  
Under their pent two lurking captives house.  
Restless, insatiate, the millionaire  
Paces his cell, serves his life sentence there.

Could you but bring the child that slumbers there  
Out of the spirit's slums to larger air  
Into God's sunshine, let His winds of grace  
Lighten the lines and shadows of the face,

Waken the soul that sinks, and yet recalls  
Visions of sunlit seas and garden walls,  
Echoes of careless song and love and mirth;  
You would build heaven's kingdom here on earth.  
"You must be born again," the Scripture saith,  
Many, so many, only after death.

*New York, 9' 18 '07.*

## THE VICTORS

WE have fought and we have made the pace and  
risen from the ruck.

We have got our grip on piracy and learned to  
discount luck.

And the little men kow-tow to us. The big ones stand  
aside.

In hundred horse-power racing cars straight to our  
mark we ride.

And we break the last speed limit. And we hog the  
whole highway

For the earth to-day belongs to those who have the  
power to pay.

We have dammed the whole world's money lust, its  
hunger and its cold.

With our irrigation rentals legislatures bought and  
sold,

Fix our tariffs and our subsidies. Immunity we buy.  
And justice is our serving wench. Her lovers steal  
and lie.

They are wedded to our wages. They are panders to  
our will.

We make machines that mangle men and maim and  
crush and kill.

And women starve and walk the streets, and gutter  
children curse

In the sweatshops, on the sidewalks, that defile the  
universe.

And we have to bear the brunt of it. The muck-rake  
handlers tell

How the masters of the millions try to raise the rents  
of hell.

And the press that can't be subsidized its searchlight  
arrows sends

Till they nail us to the target of a life that 's lost its  
friends.

It 's a life that loses interest when you weary of the  
game,

And you see that all creation will be running just the  
same

When you have to leave the levers, and there,'s no one  
left to care;

And the flowers are still in blossom on the ramparts  
of the air,

Where the stars stake out their heavens to the souls  
that stayed in touch;

And the whole that you 've accomplished does n't  
seem to come to much.

Yet the world is made for money, and for record stakes  
we played.

If the game has gone against us we will quit it  
unafraid,

For there can't be worse before us than the sense of  
all that 's dead

With our broken dreams of boyhood, in the blackness  
there ahead.

And our work shall stand to witness in a world of  
fighting men

Till the Master of to-morrow whispers, "Son, begin  
again."

*New York, 10' 11 '09.*

## FLOTSAM

PARKS may be the city's breathing places,  
If they are, they breed tuberculosis,  
Little ones like this where most you find us.  
Hoboes, beggars, race-course touts, repeaters,  
Poolroom sharps, bums, failures, thieves and panders.  
There 's the city lodging-house, its vermin  
Bred and fed by us for generations.  
There are free lunch counters and the bread line.  
There are easy marks with dimes and nickels.  
Beer is cheap, the papers are still cheaper—  
And cigar butts can be had for nothing.  
There are women fools enough to trust us,  
Prostitutes and our own wives and daughters,  
When you 're up against it hard, the wood-yard.  
When the weather 's cold you break a window,  
One on Broadway filled with phoney diamonds,  
Go to jail and let the city keep you,  
Laugh at starving fools that think they 're honest.  
Nothing matters much unless you 're thirsty  
Or a copper beats you up for nothing,  
Just one finger of the hand that scratches  
When we bite too hard. You 're just as lousy  
As we are ourselves. Your lungs are putrid  
With us and our like and we infect you.

So we go along with you to judgment.  
Hell, you 've got to die as well as we have.  
Then, what good will all your money do you?  
If we had one chance you had a thousand.  
God himself can't say that we have made you,  
And the devil knows you 'll stand for us then.

*New York, 10' 14 '09.*

## YOU

YOU of the higher selfishness whose god is self  
    sublimed,  
Whose cult is culture carved or sung, or written,  
    painted, rhymed,  
Who hug your little hoard along the ledge where you  
    have climbed;

And dream you near the mountain-top, and dread to  
    look below  
From misty seats Olympian and life's grim battle  
    know,  
And men like you that starve and slay, whose blood  
    and tears must flow.

You feed to surfeiting with lies, you raise the false  
    ideal  
Of sterile ease immaculate, that others dimly feel  
Since you are far, aloof, unknown; is fair and high and  
    real.

You blindly die. Unfit to strive, the beauty of the  
    strong,  
The soul that keeps its light alive through warfare  
    long with wrong  
That soiled and scarred shall still survive, a living  
    marching song,

Is not for you; ye faithless Scribes and Pharisees to-day

Who anise, mint and cummin weigh, and tithes of trifles pay;

Who wrest the spirit of the law and love's great soul betray;

Whose single talent vellum wrapped, in gloss and comment hid,

Must moulder more than multiply until the world is rid

Of moral loss and leprosy; till men your like forbid.

You are the palace eunuchs of the world's seraglio dark.

You are the spirit's panders. Your gifts like jewels mark

A soul's seduction from the light of truth. And still we hark

To prophets false, to priests that preach the symbol for the deed.

Whose empty chalice gem-adorned you hold to hands that bleed.

For you have spilled the wine of life and crucified its creed.

And still the people suffer you, pain brings forgetfulness,

And strife and grief each day grow great; and loyal love grows less;

Deserters from the cause of God whose name your lips confess;

Clergy, professors, critics, all who share the cynic's  
view,

Children who dream till scales shall fall and judgment day be due.

Ye know not what ye do. For all is pardon, so for  
you.

*Paris, 11' 27 '08.*

## IX—VARIA

### THE PHONOGRAPH

I AM the voice of your race and hour, strident,  
mechanical, harsh.  
And my megaphone with its brazen flower like a lily  
in the marsh  
In the stagnant souls and minds of men quickens a  
vague perfume  
Till the past grows near and clear again through the  
grayness and the gloom.  
And the seeds of thought and of feeling hid in the  
blackness of the clay  
My silent record's dust amid, I harrow forth to-day.  
And they bloom in the faces wan and worn and they  
brighten weary eyes,  
And faith and hope and love reborn make a moment's  
Paradise.  
Where the blubber melts and the ceiling drips in the  
Eskimo's hut of snow,  
In the foc'sles dim of deep-sea ships; where the trades  
through palm trees blow,  
Under the blaze of the tropic stars, on the islands of  
the mist,  
Where the mining camp the mountain scars, my  
monotones persist.

In the forest dark, in the darker den whence the savage raids the slum,  
I charm the hearts of brutes and men, I waken voices dumb.  
More than the printed book I say; more than the written word,  
Or the preacher's art, I seize and sway. Wherever my voice is heard  
And the people gather by twos and threes, red men and black and white,  
I open larger liberties of vision and delight.  
I am the voice of your race and hour, the sound of your vast machine,  
And a gospel new of truth and power, a word from the world unseen.  
Strident, mechanical, harsh am I, to your breathless measures set,  
But I tell of a land beyond the sky, of a life ye shall not forget.

*S. S. Medic, 2' 16 '09.*

## THE SONG OF THE WIRES

BIRTH of the world and the wrestle of elements,  
sudden division of darkness from light,  
Such were the powers whose strength had begotten us,  
e'er we were prisoned in aeons of night.  
Then came the miners, they found and they fashioned  
us, stretched us afar over earth and below.  
Some in the sunshine are harpstrings, Aeolian, resonant,  
struck by the winds when they blow;  
Some in the shadow taught tenderer harmonies,  
laughter of lovers bring lip unto lip;  
Mother's devotion and children's endearments and  
tidings of cheer from the tempest-tossed ship,  
Whirl round the world. And we whisper the infamies  
men and our masters constrain us to tell,  
Their slanders and rumors and treasons and perjuries.  
Secrets eternal of science we spell.  
Lifework of prophets and priests and philosophers,  
vision of poets and raptures of saints,  
Notes that arise from the stress of our symphony,  
cries of the flesh and the spirit that faints.

And the roar of the market-place swells and shall  
storm, overwhelming the day,  
And your homes and your hearts shall invade and  
possess, and the night shall not drive it away.

And its echoes shall trouble your slumbers while you  
start at our summoning bells;  
To the hills and the seas shall pursue you with a spell  
that allures and compels.  
And the forests shall yield you no refuge. You shall  
raze them and set them ablaze.  
You shall prospect for gold in the desert with the thirst  
that first maddens, then slays.  
You shall toil and shall widen the city till its ulcer  
of steel and of stone  
Eats the flesh from God's earth and its beauty. You  
flay the world bare to the bone.  
You shall strive and your hearts shall be hardened and  
shortened your sight and your breath,  
You shall stifle your souls and shall rest not till you  
lie in the silence of death.  
This is the truth that we tell in a tongue inarticulate,  
mute,  
This is our warning and prayer in the path of your  
breathless pursuit.  
Voices that wrangled in chaos, through silence of  
centuries taught  
Service and order and law and the ultimate triumph  
of thought,  
Freed by your hands to enlighten your spirits, and  
rendered again  
Slaves to your weakness to-day that to-morrow in  
strength shall remain,  
Powers that throb in your pulses and order the drift  
of the sun,  
Weighing and strictly recording the good and the ill  
ye have done,

Messengers dumb and divine, and your kinsmen, we  
counsel you still;

Watching your steps for a sign of the way of the  
infinite Will.

*Paris, 11' 7 '08.*

## THE SONG OF THE TYPEWRITER

I 'M the god from the machine of modern trade,  
And my oracle 's a rattle and a jerk.  
Flying fingers quiver quick  
While I race the ticker's click.  
So I hold a world of weariness to work.

I 'm a bundle keen of slender twitching nerves,  
And the keyboard where the market prices play.  
And the note that I give forth,  
Restless children of the North,  
You can hear it in your voices more each day.

When the long dull winter afternoon drags slow,  
And each file you lift seems weighted down with lead,  
And the dollar signs grow dim  
And the rows of figures swim,  
You can hear my hammers pounding in your head.

They will play you up success that cannot last,  
They will tell you tales of failure's crushing blow,  
But however fares the quest  
They will give you little rest  
Till the end when there is nothing much to show.

Better rest a bit and turn your weary eyes  
To the girl who lays her fingers on my keys,  
Just to catch her weary smile;  
And to dream a little while  
In the long forgotten kingdom of heart's ease.

I 'm the god from the machine that holds you fast.  
And my sibyl slurs her copy when she can.  
Though her beauty is n't much  
It shall add the saving touch  
To an iron world made merchandise by man.

*New York, 6' 4 '03.*

## THE TUNNEL

THEY have taken the strongest and slightest of things, they have prisoned the powers of the air. They have narrowed the sweep of the whirlwind's wings to a half-inch width; and there Each ghostly hafted hammer rings with the rhythm of an iron prayer.

And labor's endless litanies in this crypt that is carved in night,  
Sound while the woods and the waters freeze and the ground grows hard and white;  
While the spring awakes and the summer breeze, and the world is bathed in light.

And the rock that grew hard at the lava's height in a crater cold gives way.  
And the drills march on, and the dynamite its siege guns brings to play.  
And the powers of darkness turn to flight; and the workers win toward day.

Somewhere beyond on the other side of the mountain men are toiling,  
Mining the winter's citadel and its storms and rigors foiling;  
Marking humanity's advance by a cable's ceaseless coiling.

## The Tunnel

Slowly they move to the tunnel's end and the last  
pale arclights glimmer,  
Where the burnt out carbons strew the way, with  
faces gray and grimmer  
As the screen of stone between grows thin, and the  
flames of life burn dimmer:

Till the echoing hammers answer fast; and their toil  
in the tunnel ended,  
And the last black barrier rent and passed, and the  
wall by death defended;  
Their own shall lead them out at last into sunlight  
new and splendid.

*Paris, 11' 12 '08.*

## THE COTTON MILL

THE children in the tropics ran  
Naked and warm and free and fair.  
We preached till trade in prints began.  
We brought our gin and Bibles there  
And found new ways to fetter man.

We dammed the rivers, rapids taught  
To ply the spindle, wheel and loom,  
And children from the steerage caught  
And prisoned them in noise and gloom  
And long and blindly greed has wrought:

A spider in a cranny gray  
That sits and spins his strands of steel,  
That sucks the children's lives away,  
Their thirst and hunger cannot feel  
Or hear the words they cannot say.

Outside the world is warm and bright,  
Within they languish pale and thin,  
And dust and lint and plague and blight  
Their shrunken chests are breathing in.  
They buried four last night.

And yet they smile in childish glee  
As dancing motes, when through the clouds  
The sunshine breaks, and strive to see;  
And patient sit and spin their shrouds,  
And wonder wistfully.

**The Cotton Mill**

They cough and choke and strangle there,  
And greed the spider old and gray  
From each frail life exacts his share.  
We women who his prices pay  
His leper's livery wear.

*Paris, 10 '3 '06.*

## THE SUPREME COURT

THIS is our National Academy  
Of human rights, the sanctuary of freedom.  
Here there is silence. While the Senate chaffers  
And the House raves, and all the world outside  
Batters its breaches in the walls of peace,  
These old men sit deliberate and wise,  
And weigh their evidence. So shall you see  
A laboratory's balance room, the scales  
Where twenty letters on a sheet of paper  
Shall outweigh ten. They place their test tubes there,  
Write down the ultimate analysis  
Of equity, until the formula  
Of justice stands assured, irrevocable.  
This is the higher criticism of truth,  
In flesh and blood beyond all written records.  
And here the hand of God as truly writes  
As when the lightnings shook the mountain top  
And Moses bore the tables of the law  
From trembling Sinai. Not in storm or earthquake,  
The shoutings of the street, the roar of war  
And revolutions, does He speak to-day,  
But in the still small voice that here ordains  
Cities of refuge for the souls of men  
Whereof this is the chief. So long as we

## The Supreme Court

Shall guard this inner shrine inviolate,  
Passion and avarice, unrest and treason,  
Shall be no more than fevers in the body  
While the brain rules, and will indomitable  
Holds fast our Anglo-Saxon heritage  
Of freedom and fair play to least and greatest.

*New York, 10' 30 '09.*

## THE REGIMENT

THE traffic clears, and the crowd to the curb shifts  
to the roll of drums,  
As down the dusty avenue the long brown column  
comes.  
And their faces match their khaki. From Luzon's  
tropic suns  
They took this tan, and the glint of their eyes like  
the glitter of their guns  
Flamed on the way to Pekin till they saw the flag still  
there.  
They bear their faded colors past, and something in  
the air  
Lessens the roar of the city! One gray bystander sees  
The Stars and Stripes at Gettysburg and faces set like  
these  
When death broke battle's mould. They pass,  
indomitable, strong,  
Wearing the deathless order of discipline. The throng  
Gentile and Jew and Kelt and Hun and their own  
blood brothers thrill  
To the ripple of their cadenced ranks; for now the  
drums are still  
And the measured tread of feet that marched to set  
the Cubans free,  
Falls on the asphalt like the sound of breakers when  
the sea

Strikes on the sands at midnight to mark the pulse  
of time.  
And the nation's heart-beat blends with them; the  
boys that breathless climb  
To a lamp-post or a column's height, the girls whose  
ardent eyes  
Wake to a world of fighting men and the dream that  
never dies,  
Embattled, grim, in touch with them; crude as brown  
powder grains  
That leap to life and shake the air when freedom fires  
her trains.  
Essential, hard, dynamic, fit and silent still they go,  
Down the pathway of their duty to a goal that none  
may know.  
Here is the nation's last reserve, these and their next  
of kin  
When the ends of earth are looted bare and the years  
of wrath begin.  
For each heart guards its citadel and these shall serve  
alone  
When millions fail and navies sink and forts are  
overthrown.  
They pass and the city's tumult throbs through its  
arteries  
And fills them full of greed and lust, dishonor and  
disease,  
And dreams insane of peace unearned, decadence and  
disgrace.  
*But still the red blood corpuscles shall vitalize the race.*

*New York, 10' 23 '09.*

## THE BALLET

LISTEN, the flutes of fairyland are sounding far  
away.

And the curtain climbs, and the footlights flame like  
the dawn of a summer day

And out of the shadows steal the sprites to whirl like  
the winds at play.

You that are free from the bonds of flesh shall see  
them dancing there

Through the lights, and the shadows' shifting mesh,  
immortal, fresh and fair

Like the living notes of a song that floats forever in  
the air.

Look where one comes to the sound of drums and  
oboes as she trips

Touching the hidden hands of life with lifted finger  
tips,

With the smiling pride of the première exultant on her  
lips.

She is incarnate joy and youth, beauty whose soul is  
grace

Like the flowers that sway in the breeze of May.  
And the spring has flushed her face.

And the heart of the old world warms to her for an  
hour and a breathing space.

And the sombre soul of the city wakes to a season of  
delight

And its plaudits fall as its pulses stir like the roses red  
and white

She crushes to her bosom there to bear into the night.

There there is sorrow and despair and the weight of  
lonely years,

She goes to join her sisters there in an ocean salt with  
tears

And the curtain falls. Like a breaking wave her  
triumph disappears.

Day after day from the depths of life, from the ends  
of the earth they rise

Wave after wave with its froth and foam and its  
impulse towards the skies.

Night after night they cast their spray and they die  
as daylight dies.

And the line of the ballet surging high like the comb-  
er's curving crest,

Feels the pulse of life as it swells and falls by a pur-  
pose strong possessed,

As passion on through Cosmos crawls to a harbor  
sure of rest.

*New York, 9' 21 '09.*

## THE SYMPHONY

THE great proscenium arch gapes wide, the gates  
of darkness fall.

A single cornet's note has cried its challenge clear to  
all.

Each crowded tier at either side thrills through the  
darkened hall.

We look into another world; God's stage with music  
set,

We watch the leader's baton swing, and cares and  
fears forget,

Our breath and pulses keep his time, and weary eyes  
grow wet.

We hear the rustle of the leaves, like winds that wake  
at dawn.

To whisper peace to sleepless ears. On faces white  
and drawn

The dew of heaven's kisses lies. The hour of rest is  
gone.

Swift as the rush of sunrise as the rays that blazon day  
The full crescendo sings and soars. A skylark melts  
away

In music in the blue above. The shades no more  
delay.

## The Symphony

They fade; all silence ceases as noon comes surging  
high.

An arm that drags the zenith down is raised to reach  
the sky,

To lift a thousand dormant souls from depths where  
spirits die.

He grips us, gains us, holds us; for his moment rare,  
supreme.

The master's soul reborn in him has realized its dream.  
And heaven on high and earth below one world, one  
second seem.

A string has snapped, the tension breaks, the sym-  
phony is flawed,

A woman laughs. Another yawns. The brute but  
half o'erawed

Stirs restlessly. Men plan again, the tools of greed  
and fraud.

For sunset always follows noon. The powers of  
darkness rise

To meet a meteor chord that falls in splendor from the  
skies;

The leader's pride like Lucifer's grows less before our  
eyes.

We were too weary to applaud. And night's forget-  
fulness

Fell like a curtain on our pain. To-day through  
storm and stress

The echoes rise, insistent, strong, to stir and save and  
bless.

## The Symphony

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For we are weak, unresting, blind. She is not here to  
see,  
To say our triumphs have not failed, our hour is yet  
to be,  
Our losses are our instruments in heaven's symphony

*Paris, 12' 26 '08.*

## THE CAMERA

SINCE you have not eyes to see  
Since you have not faith to find  
Vision, vistas, liberty;  
I was made to aid the blind.

I am beauty's dwarf and slave,  
Cramped and colorless and cold.  
Black my art is. From the grave  
I can charm your hours of old.

When the summer suns have set,  
Winter's twilight stark and white  
I invade lest you forget  
All the loveliness of light.

Where the slum, a shadow black  
Bars your trail to things above,  
I adventure, bringing back  
Children's laughter, youth and love.

Prisoned beauty's slave I speed;  
Painter, poet, errant knight;  
Cry for succor till you heed,  
Then she blesses you with light.

*Paris, 11' 19 '08.*

## X—VERITIES

### PIONEERS

THEY have blazed the way with bloodshed  
where their fires of torture burned,  
Signals black of smoke that showed where danger lay.  
And the young men turned to seek them. And their  
strong hearts westward yearned  
And went camping with the sun from day to day.

And they followed running water and took counsel  
with the breeze  
And the stars they closely questioned when they  
could.  
And their sign-posts were the mosses and the slanting  
trunks of trees  
In the darkness and the dangers of the wood.

Close behind them came their women. They were  
splendid, brave and strong;  
Fresh and fair as forest children that they bore.  
They were freedom's primal pilgrims. Love and war  
their marching song  
Through the shadowed silence echoed more and more.

Through the forest's dim cathedrals, through the  
    windows autumn stained,  
As they went their eyes were wise the truth to see.  
From the foes that lay in ambush where the red man's  
    arrows rained,  
From the wilderness of death their souls went free.

In the distance they are calling through the ghosts of  
    fallen trees  
Where the city's voice makes deaf our modern ears.  
We have dulled our eyes with ledgers, loosed the  
    sinews of our knees,  
Shortened breath and stride, who once were pioneers.

But the impulse and the measure of their marching  
    stirs us still,  
And the instinct of the race that shall not fail;  
While we bring the big battalions of to-day to work  
    their will  
And we follow where they scouted down the trail.

*Paris, 5' 11 '09.*

## THE TALENT

SO when this man was on his sick-bed laid  
And tasted death his heart grew sore afraid,  
"O God, if there be any God," he prayed.

"Because Thy law was hard I lived in fear.  
Wrapped in its napkin see Thy talent here,  
Shrouded and saved for Thee this many a year."

And Life, his lord, made answer: "Thou hast failed  
Miser of years and seconds death assailed.  
Nor has thy cowardice at all availed.

"Life is thy talent, thine to use or lose,  
Hoarded it wastes like withered heart and thews,  
Life is a game where all must stake and choose.

"Life is a battle where no mortal may  
Stand and look on, where all one law obey,  
And none dare shrink and shameless steal away.

"Who wrestles not with life and fells his foes,  
Holds fast his wife and children; never knows  
Warrior's and lover's triumphs, trials and woes;

"Who sleepless serves not science, toils nor prays  
Through art's long ritual of laborious days,  
To raise his God made flesh that lives always;

“Who in love’s sacraments has never shared;  
Feasted his friends, nor for the dying cared;  
Nor his own sleep to save the starving spared;

“He has not lived. In him the vital flame  
Reverting trembles backward whence it came,  
And he shall die, as dies unheard his name.”

Then said life’s traitor, “Lord what shall I do?”  
Answered his Master, “Sleep, then strive anew.”  
And round his eyes the veil of darkness drew.

*S. S. Navua, 3’ 21 ’09.*

## THE VISION

DEAD walls have made your spirits dead, and  
dust has dulled your eyes.

You see a single step ahead. You haggle and devise.  
You crowd one corner of the earth to count and hoard  
your gold,

Misers of love and smiles and mirth, whose souls for  
shams are sold.

The dawn is robed in splendor. You will not wake  
to see.

From twilight's promise tender you hurry breathlessly  
Into the blaze of restless nights that counterfeit the  
day.

The stars hang out their signal lights. Your thoughts  
are far away.

Your brothers toil in darkness long. Their children  
starve and die.

Out of their sickness you grow strong. You steal  
from them the sky.

You cheat the blind. The weak you maim. You  
grudge them light and air.

You take your tithes of women's shame that makes  
your daughters fair.

Your whole horizon slowly shrinks as your hard hearts  
shrink

While you relinquish wholly freedom to feel and think.

## The Vision

You are but babes within the womb of the travail  
of to-day  
Till angels from your living tomb shall roll the rock  
away.

Sorrow maybe or a baby's smile; and your soul is born  
anew.  
And you raise your eyes in wonder while the sunrise  
turns to blue.  
And you see the sky in a tuft of flowers, in a gutter  
urchin's eyes,  
And the rain comes rippling down in showers on the  
streams of Paradise.

And you see the streets of the city, and the blind and  
breathless throng.  
And a part of an infinite pity has made your purpose  
strong;  
From all that chokes and thwarts and kills, the  
prisoners to set free  
On the holy places of the hills and the highways of the  
sea.

Beauty that is your heritage belongs to you once  
more,  
And the child's true heart that cannot age, that smil-  
ing shall adore;  
The loveliness that will redeem the lives you learn to  
share.  
You have awakened to the dream and the Vision that  
is prayer.

*Bath Beach, 9' 8 '09.*

## THE MACHINE

WHEN Joseph ruled in Egypt he was master of  
our craft,  
And Pharaoh's prison taught him how the wheels  
were greased with graft;  
And he taxed the people shrewdly, and he made his  
little deal  
With the priest's machine that hated him since less  
was left to steal.

When Caesar wrote his Gallic War, the senate fixed  
the slate,  
And they shipped him to the Philippines to sidetrack  
him, too late.  
And he went and made his own machine of iron  
fighting men  
And the legions smashed the primaries, and he was  
boss again.

This is creation's story from the first primeval years  
When the cave-men shamans got their grip on king  
and people's fears  
And they worked the spirits overtime, till some one  
guessed the game  
And made them stand in with him. And it's always  
been the same.

People are sheep. We've Scripture's word for it,  
and so they know  
But very little more about the way they ought to go.

## The Machine

You fleece them close; their wool grows fast. And if  
you did n't—why  
Worse wolves than we are waiting, and they 'd simply  
stray and die.

You 've got to keep them in the rut. You crowd them  
on the train,  
You 've got to have conductors and brakemen and  
the brain  
That built and fired the engine; and that fires the  
driver too  
When he gets to think he knows it all, and has no use  
for you.

We had to live like other men, and so we took our  
share.  
Maybe it was a bit too large. So now we pay our  
fare.  
We keep the traffic moving though. One thing we  
know. The way  
To make men value anything like freedom. Make  
them pay.

If they won't give time or blood, then cash. We can't  
and won't step down,  
And let reformers wreck the train, so long as any  
town  
They can't make good in for two years. But when  
they 've learned the game,  
And win promotion to our place, we 'll be more glad  
than tame.

*Paris, 11' 18 '08.*

## THE PRAETORIANS

CARTHAGE had her money kings that spoiled  
the seven seas,  
Trusts that stole and slew and lied and lusted at  
their ease,  
Wholesale hired their soldiery, safety bought with  
shame,  
Tempted Rome to war with them and sank in blood  
and flame.

Rome that thinned her legions' blood learned to  
decimate  
Valor of her pioneers that made her strong and great,  
Formed her Caesars' body-guards of aliens; paid  
them well,  
Lost the art of war herself and then went down to  
hell.

Likewise in Byzantium we were Varangars,  
Ruin and revolt repulsed, and tribute took for scars,  
Milked the gambling houses dry, and taxed the  
prostitute,  
Saw the church complacent eye our long campaign of  
loot.

## The Praetorians

Now we pay praetorians, Irish, Germans, Jews;  
Do our stealing wholesale and their protection use;  
Let them scare the little thieves and lock them up  
for life,

If they won't divide the graft; let them hold the knife

To our own throats now and then, reckless in our haste;  
Let them tax the powers that prey, spoil, defile and  
waste;

Let them make their red machines the image of our  
own.

(So we have to compromise where once we thieved  
alone).

After us the deluge. Shameless in our greed,  
Nero and Caligula, we our people bleed.

Roundsmen and praetorians who have learned the  
game,

Goad the slums to savagery: all human and the same.

Messalina motors past, our predestined mate.

Arabs, Kaffirs, Japanese look and lust and hate.

Shadows of their airship swarms fall athwart our sky.

Manhood, freedom for our sons our money may not  
buy.

*Paris, 11' 26 '08.*

## THE HOME

WELL our Paradise was lost;  
Sinless Eden made our own  
Wistfully in dreams alone;  
Hut of snow in polar frost,  
Cave or tent or open sky,  
Where we trysted, you and I:  
Eden found in children's smiles.

Love, the endless weary miles  
That our restless race has trod  
On its road that leads to God  
Still are urgent incomplete.  
Still the murmur of the sea  
Makes our moments' threnody:  
Life so short and life so sweet.

Well our Paradise was won;  
Shadow in the tropic sun,  
Castle warm in winter's cold,  
Harbor where our hearts shall hold  
Cables sure a little space;  
Shrine that sanctifies your face  
And the child that looks to you.

## The Home

Dear, if anything is true,  
Dear, if anything is dear,  
We shall find our treasure here.  
In the city's shadowed hells  
Something sacred somewhere dwells.  
Dear, if anything is strong  
We shall save them who belong  
To our Captain's body-guard—  
Life so sweet and life so hard.

*S. S. Marama, 3' 31 '09.*

## THE UNFIT

WE lacked the purpose long avowed,  
The master's will, the hero's soul.  
We walked and slumbered with the crowd.  
We lagged and lost the distant goal.

Begotten of essential brute,  
Betrayed by error, want and vice,  
And baffled by each blind pursuit,  
Your burden and your sacrifice:

We are your very flesh and blood.  
To us your children spoiled revert;  
Since tides must ebb that have their flood.  
And more than us your own you hurt;

Who blindly waste the wine of life,  
Who crush its bubbles, scorn its scent;  
Who busy in your breathless strife  
Would mutilate a continent.

Since you have bound and crippled us  
Blinded and bought, yourselves you maim.  
We judge you false and covetous  
Since we are human, and the same.

## The Unfit

We have not learned to earn our joy.  
We dream a little and forget.  
Children of chaos, girl and boy.  
We are not fit to suffer yet.

So have you thrust us toward the pit,  
Not ours the fault alone we know.  
We are unready and unfit,  
We are your youth. And we shall grow.

*San Francisco, 6' 4 '09.*

## THE SLUM

YOU have watered the primitive out of your lives.  
From the passive embraces of children and  
wives

You race to the ticker. You 've narrowed the sea,  
Sawed the forests to matchwood; and cycles to be  
The fruit of your haste shall enjoy at their ease,  
And the nature you hunt from the mountains and trees  
That you hustle and stunt, doubles back to us here.  
We are cave-men primeval with faces of fear.  
And wild eyes you have lured from Armenian hills  
And from Sicily's valleys, and hot hate that kills  
That we nurse in our hearts, in our gray granite hive  
When your cold blood grows thin shall yet keep you  
alive.

Stop and look at our life, its crowds, color and smells,  
Its law of the jungle, its homes that are hells.

We're alive there though. You in your blank brown-  
stone blocks,

And their bleakness that blinds you to shadows and  
shocks,

And to high lights and harmony; culture that dwells  
In apartment hotels that are life's prison cells,  
And is proud not to know its next door neighbor's  
name,

You are cliff-dwellers too, and our tribe is the same.

You are cowards. Convention's your castle and  
creed.

And you live in its limbo. We; sickness and need  
Have taught us our joys and our sorrows to share  
With our money and matches. You hoard yours. Be  
fair,

Try to focus the picture, the Master's last word,  
Big, impressionistic. Come down and be stirred  
By our poets, our prayers. Come to grips with our  
graft,

For its germs breed in you, and we're all in one craft.  
We're the scum of creation? Salvation shall come  
For the race, for the nation, for all from the slum.

*Paris, 11' 16 '08.*

## THE IRON CREED

WE are heirs of evolution and children of to-day,  
And from our own environment we may not  
break away.

We may not sing like Homer gray, Olympus crowned  
with snow,

And gods and demigods who war with men on earth  
below.

We may not love as Dante did nor paint with Raph-  
ael's hand,

For the mountains are brought low to-day; the plains,  
the sands expand.

We may not cry the martyr's creed and soar on wings  
of flame.

We may not live as hermits to adore one awful Name.

We may not love one woman now and count the world  
well lost,

We may not save our single souls at all creation's cost.

Life has demanded more of us for it has given more.

Though still the holy mountains call the soul to climb  
and soar.

We may not live transfigured there, we may not love  
alone,

We must come down and strive with men and make  
their cause our own.

## The Iron Creed

No more than bodies starved or maimed, may minds,  
    may spirits fast,  
Efficiency becomes the creed of all the world at last.  
Salvation's price is greater now since life is more than  
    death,  
As a searchlight in the storm excels an altar candle's  
    breath.  
Our God to-day has many names, our heaven is power  
    applied.  
Our hell the city's shams and shames, the waste of  
    life denied.

We have lost our last illusion, childhood of the race,  
The golden age that never was, the golden stairs of  
    grace,  
Sinless heaven freely given, harbor safe at last,  
Life means wave on wave of storm and calm to struggle past.  
Sleep of death like earth in winter, growth that never  
    ends,  
Love like radium whose rays make all the world its  
    friends.  
Morning's shadows fade. The world must toil through  
    noonday's blaze,  
Yet one living parable shall gladden iron days.  
Golden age forever safe in laughter of a child.  
Heaven smiled. Hell has them now who have that  
    smile defiled.

*Paris, 12' 9 '08.*

## THE MESSAGE

WHAT does it all mean? Simply this,  
Out of the blackness of the night  
Where planets swarm and suns expire;  
Sparks from the one eternal light,  
And voices of creation's choir  
We come to solve our share of bliss.

We come to sound the human scale,  
To strive and suffer, seek and smile,  
From sorrow's lowest depths to soar  
To perfect joy a little while;  
Before our singing sounds no more  
To hear one echo ere we fail.

We come to kindle light divine  
In eyes unborn and blind and dim,  
Till risen spirits wake and see  
Some vision strong of seraphim,  
That war on earth eternally  
And human life with heaven align.

We come to live and love and learn;  
The vast of space to comprehend,  
The atom's essence to explore,  
The mind's dominion to extend;  
To war with darkness more and more  
While heaven's beacons brighter burn.

## The Message

We come to live and learn and love;  
To hush and raise to harmony  
The discords harsh of sin and pain,  
To merge the past and time to be  
Within one vibrant heart and brain;  
And singing clear, to soar above.

*Paris, 11' 19 '08.*

## ENVOY

### THE IRON MUSE

DEAREST, I saw the city of the dead,  
The shadowed streets of space; each starry  
light  
Where the great souls that conquered storm and night  
And cold that stills the heart, that stumbled, bled,  
And rose from sin and shame, eternally  
Stride on the Master's errands; nor regret  
The loves they left on earth, that might not be;  
Though in their dreams they see us dimly yet.  
And linking earth and heaven and hell's unstarred  
abysm, I saw  
The iron strands of one supreme unalterable law.

Midnight His smithy is. The lightnings are  
Sparks from His forge. His anvil earth. At dawn  
His fire flames forth, His steel is shaped and drawn;  
And men His patterns learn to make or mar  
In freedom's likeness. So our fathers wrought  
His image in the name of Liberty;  
And thought the idol that their blood had bought  
Forever should be spotless, strong and free.

We who are sad and stained; who stronger still  
through struggle grow;  
Freedom that rests not from her war forever, learn to  
know.

Dearest, there may be planets younger yet;  
Americas unborn may wait us there,  
New worlds to win, more fertile and more fair,  
Where we our earthly warfare shall forget;  
Where pain and shame may seem a little thing,  
Like joy and triumph done with long ago;  
And love itself a song too old to sing,  
When we the fulness of God's heavens shall know.  
It may be so above; below to-day our dwelling-place  
'Time-stained and strong, grows ever dearer, fairer,  
like your face.









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